

THE CRY OF VASHTI

AND OTHER VERSES

M.A.B. EVANS





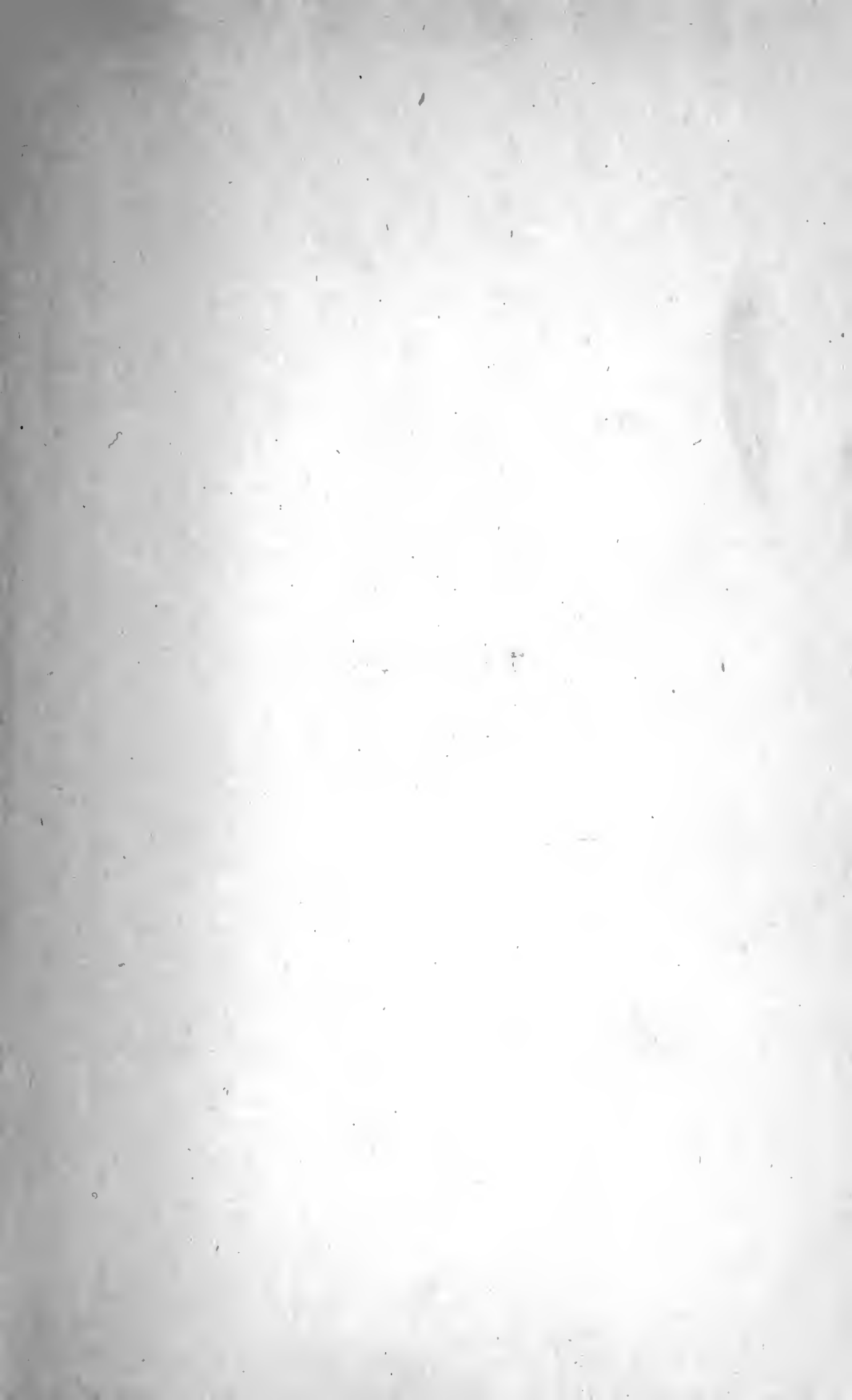
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The Cry of Vashti

and

Other Verses

By
M. A. B. Evans

Author of "The Caliph's Secret," "The Moonlight Sonata," "In Various Moods," "Nymphs, Nixies, and Naiads," etc.



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by
M. A. B. Evans

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To

ALL THE FRIENDS

THAT CARE FOR ME

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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The Cry of Vashti
and
Other Verses

THE CRY OF VASHTI.

THE mellow light gleamed over Shushan's hall,
Where sat Ahasuerus and his friends
Who banqueted in state, surpassing all
That ever heretofore had served his ends.
The music rang; the wine flowed fast and free;
The Eastern perfumes filled the heavy air;
The dancers, with unwonted liberty,
Sought favor of the monarch debonair.
With harps and cymbals flowing robes kept time,
While white feet shone like snow on Hermon's hill.
The King looked gayly at the merry mime,
And bade them still continue, at his will.
The hours flew on, while yet they danced and sang.
At last, the King grew weary of the scene;
And as the merry shouts and laughter rang,
He rose, and sent a message to the Queen,
To come,—at once,—and show th' attending throng
Her own great beauty, far transcending aught
That any dancing girl, or child of song
Could show, however fair, or ably taught.

4 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

Then out spake Vashti: "Is it thus you send,
 O great Ahasuerus, to your Queen?
Would you have me my queenly pride unbend,
 And so my noble ancestry demean?
I am the daughter of a mighty King;
 With power as great as yours, if not outspread
So far. No dancing girl am I, to swing
 Her jeweled scarf above her foolish head,
With hope to win a fortune by her smile.
 I am the Queen of Persia! By what right
Am I thus called, my husband to beguile?
 I will not go, unless by force and might.
I will invoke the laws of mine own land;
 And not be shamed before this ribald host.
And if in judgment I am called to stand,
 I will be heard. My cause shall not be lost.
It is not meet a Queen should thus comport
 Herself. Within this palace is my home,
And here I take my stand, within this court.
 Go, tell the mighty King, I will not come!"

Wroth was the monarch, when this answer came.

The Persian and the Median lords, amazed,
Cried out; lest all their wives should do the same,—

A Queen's example is so surely praised,
And followed. Thus would discipline be gone,

The just commands of husbands put aside,
Each wife a law unto herself alone,—

It was an insult to all lordly pride.
To Vashti then the King sent Magian seers,
To summon her once more; or else foretell
Her downfall, working on her pride and fears,
Lest rival Queen should be beloved as well
As she, who now in beauteous form and face

Held sway o'er mightiest of monarchs known.
Was this worth while, to lose the foremost place

In all of Persia, which was now her own?
They pleaded, too, the force of what she did,

The bad example set to other wives,
Who would refuse to come when they were bid,
And so upset full many peaceful lives.

6 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

“O mighty seers,” quoth Vashti: “well ye know
It is not right, that which the King doth ask.
There is a higher law than ye can show;
And this shall be my most unwelcome task,
Still to uphold the law of modesty,
A rule of binding force for womankind,
And which the King would surely justify,
If he were not by wine and pride made blind.
I love my Lord the King, much better far
Than all his wide-flung power, or kingly state.
For him my highest wishes always are,
That he may e’er continue strong and great.
But he, too, must abide by that same law,
The force of *right*, in all that he commands.
He knoweth well that he should now withdraw
That order which he sent me by your hands.
Go, tell him that I make a strong appeal
To that Ahasuerus whom I love,
And not the King, whose wisdom wine can steal.
Alas! I fear no words his soul will move.

"O King! O husband! Lord of all my heart!

You ne'er can know what this to me must cost.

I see fair Esther take my place and part,

A Jewish maiden take what I have lost.

Your love she has, the greatest gift of all;

Ah! could I only *this* alone retain,

I would not grieve, or mourn for any fall

From state, since happy would I still remain.

Ah! deeper in the future do I see,—

Conditions far beyond our thought or ken,

When women need no longer puppets be,

But stand in honor, in the sight of men;

Where laws of truth and justice shall prevail,

And equity shall flourish in the land;

Where lying courts and kings shall not avail

To turn the truth aside with lordly hand.

I thank you, Magian seers, for this brief glance

Across the future years; the world will ring

With hope for womankind; but this great chance

Does naught for me. Alas! my Love! my King!"

THE HILLS.

LIFT up your eyes to the Hills of Thought,
From the troubled vales below.
Let the winds of hope, from thither brought,
Through your cares and misfortunes blow.

For never a trouble is quite so bad,
As it seems when too closely viewed;
And never a sorrow is quite so sad,
With the breath of the Hills imbued.

And naught is worse than to sit and moan.
Look up! Look up from life's ills!
For strength will come, in a way unknown,—
Lift up your eyes to the Hills!

FOREST MYSTERIES.

THE winds that blow from Heaven refresh, renew,
And vivify the world; while in the light
Of sun and moon and stars, the fragrant dew,
The rains, the heat, that pulsing through both night
And day, develop powers beyond all thought
Of man, hold, in the forest, mighty sway.
Here, to perfection, are the forces brought
That move the world; and in their strength of play,
They reach far out to universal space,
And touch the springs of that Creative Power
Which first breathed o'er the empty vacant face
Of silent worlds, and in the darksome hour,
While yet unformed and nebulous, this Earth
Hung in the misty realms of nothingness,
Sent forth the wondrous force that gave it birth,
And life, and strength, and growth, and fruitfulness.

And as from out the forest life come all
The thousand voices that pervade the world,
So do the echoes, as they softly fall,
Seem from the heart of mighty chaos hurled.
The voice of love, the voice of bitter hate,
The crooning tones of mothers' lullabies,
Proclaim the universal power of Fate,
The human note in all the forest cries.

10 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

Each tree, within its branches, waves afar
 The destinies of many earthly lives,
Blown by the winds of Heaven, to make or mar,
 While through it all the breath of hope survives.
Who knows what spirits lurk in forest trees?
 We feel their kinship always, when we find
Ourselves within the magic force of these,
 And in the woods, discover our own kind.

Unseen, unknown, great forces seem to move.
 The petty things of earth all slip away,—
The universal spirit thus to prove,
 Enwrapping all within its lofty sway.
The ages-old religions merge in one,
 Which evermore will stand the test of time,
The power which gives precedence unto none,
 The Love which over all still rules sublime.
In dreaming silence, comes the glancing light,
 Among the thickly spreading branches high,
And gazing upward, far past human sight,
 The very soul of life beams from the sky.
Ah! nowhere is the heart of life revealed
 As in the forest depths. For good or ill,
Therein strange, forceful secrets are concealed,
 And glimpses of the great Almighty Will.

METEMPSYCHOSIS.

The soul of Music, wandering
Within a misty wood,
Was caught, and held, and made to sing,
While ev'ry bird, upon the wing,
Gave pause to listen, and to bring
An echo, if it could.

The soul of Music passed within
Those hundred thousand birds,
That through the air so lightly spin,
With melodies that quickly win
All poetry, to music kin,
The songs that need no words.

THE SILVER STAR.

A SILVER star across the misty sky,
In shining splendor softly drifted down,
And brought a touch of glory from on high,
The fruitful, happy years of life to crown.

Its rays, in forceful silence from above,
Gave power to many weary, drooping hearts;
In comradeship, humanity, and love,
Illumining all nature, with its darts.

Bestowing energy unknown before,
Reviving hopes that long ago seemed dead,
And lighting up the tomes of ancient lore
With meaning fresh, across their pages shed.

Transforming old opinions into new,
Dissolving useless fancies of the past,
Cementing strongly bonds of friendship true,
That through the paths of life and death will last.

Believing always of mankind the best,
And bringing out the truth, wherever found;
The worth of life and thought the only test,
Within this light of sympathy profound.

Who best can serve the actions of the hour?

Who has the most ability to plan

For all the highest good, with greatest power?

These are the questions, since this light began.

In striving thus to benefit the world,

The new philosophy of life is shown;

And on a thousand banners now unfurled

The creed of "Thought for Others" is made known.

And in this creed, the mighty hope of peace

Throughout the world most justly finds a place;

That wars and tumults may be made to cease,

And reason govern all the human race.

But for the coming of this "Peace on Earth"

The song "Good-will towards Men" must also ring.

No lasting hope of peace can e'er have birth,

Until the world this other song can sing.

To wish for others that which they desire,

Provided this accords with those demands

Of Justice, which should all the world inspire,

And which, in truth, each person understands.

For truly, there is mighty power in *Right*.

No stronger force exists, of all we know.

The fate of man would be as black as night,

If *Right* should count as nothing here below.

14 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

Inherent in the heart and mind and soul,
 Both law and kindness based upon this thought,
Life is not viewed, in either part, or whole,
 Without the certainty which thus is brought.

So, gazing into future years to come,
 The promise of a hopeful light shines forth,
A spirit kind, though keen, adventuresome,
 And fearless, in all thoughts or deeds of worth.

New ways of helping all of those in need,
 With time, or strength, or friendly hand to give,
Will daily enter into this high creed,
 And make the world a better place to live.

Still shining onward, ever and afar,
 In greater glory, and in stronger might,
Mankind rejoicing, thus the *silver* star
 Shall give, with added years, life's *golden* light!

CLOUD PLAY.

FOREVER with the fleecy clouds
The winds delight to play.
They drive them on, in merry crowds,
Throughout the livelong day.

But sometimes, in a serried row
These form themselves, and try
To brave the winds that madly blow
Across the broad blue sky.

They wheel, and whirl, and twist about,
They dance in swift delight;
They wait to hear the winds' deep shout,
Then scurry out of sight.

They form new lines; they waver, swing,
And lightly bend and sway,
Like merry birds upon the wing,—
For all things love to play!

THE WOOD NYMPH.

MY love is like a woodland sprite
The forest trees among.
For her, with springtime glow alight,
The world is ever young.

For her, the birds in branching boughs
Their sweetest songs evoke.
Each friendly fern her sway allows;
She has a heart of oak.

She staunchly stands, in rain or shine;
Though like a willow bends
Her swaying form, with grace divine,
As swift her way she wends.

So light her step, the wildwood flowers
Scarce feel her dainty tread;
But proudly touched, through sun and showers,
Each blossom lifts its head.

Her charm is felt by all around,
This lovely woodland elf;
And none just like her can be found,
Because she is—herself!

THE WIND AND THE ROSE.

SAID the Rose: "I am sorry for you, Mr. Wind;
You go whirling along through this world
In a terrible way. You must greatly have sinned,
Through the universe thus to be hurled.

"You have never a moment to rest and be still;
You must always be rushing about.
Though sometimes you whisper, you mostly are shrill,
And often you lustily shout.

"I am sorry for you that so sad is your fate!"
But the Wind laughed, and whistled around,
And when she again would have spoken,—too late!
He had scattered her leaves on the ground.

Now there is no moral, no wherefore or why,
To this little story told here;
For forces are forces, as none can deny,
And roses—will blossom next year.

THE LIGHT.

THE starlight gleam of Christmas night,
Reflected here below,
A lantern is, the way of right,
The path of life to show.

Illumined by its brilliant rays,
The old world shines anew.
Forgotten are all saddened days;
This light brings joy to view.

And dearer to each human heart,
The worth of life to prove,
These rays a fresher glow impart
To friendship, truth, and love.

DAPHNE TO APOLLO.

FROM safe retreat within my laurel tree,
I fain would speak, Apollo, unto thee,
And tell thee something which perchance will change
Thy thought of me, as being wild or strange.

I loved thee,—ah! indeed I speak the truth.
But gay and fanciful are dreams of youth,
And I had visions of advantage vast,
With life and joy which should forever last.

For I desired the freedom of an elf,
Bound by no rules, but living for myself.
I wished to rove at will the wide world o'er,
And find each day more wondrous than before.

So when thou wouldst have held me in thine arm,
Thou didst affright me; and in wild alarm,
I sought the shelter of a faithful friend,
And as a laurel tree, my life I spend.

I wave my branches, and the breezes come
To bear me where I will, far far from home;
And often I slip out, and wander forth,
To travel east and west, and south and north.

20 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

While in the daytime, with the sunlight crowned,
My feet well planted on the friendly ground,
I welcome birds and bees, that passing by,
Bring news of thee. Ah! happy then am I!

Sweet blossoms give to me their fragrance fair,
To send thee, on the silent, waiting air.
I think of thee, in all thy glory bright,
But know that this, for me, is best and right.

Thou wouldst have tired of Daphne. This I know,
O great Apollo. Thus, far better so!
I lead my own sweet life. Canst thou not see
A maiden's wish to be *herself*, and *free*?

WISHING-WELLS.

WHERE may wishing-wells be found?
Search the country all around,
Forest glade or mountain height,
In the daytime or the night,
'Neath a bending willow tree,
Or upon a grassy lea.

Never will you find them there
Though you wander ev'rywhere.
Only where kind thoughts abide,
They find shelter still to hide,—
Living wells,—though far apart,
In the *truly* friendly heart.

FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS.

HAVE you not listened, in the night,
And heard a creaking, unawares,
As if a human footstep might
Be coming up the ancient stairs?

Have you not felt a thrill of fear,
Half expectation, half a pain,
Lest presently, upon your ear,
Should fall once more that sound, made plain?

Ah! half remembered, half forgot,
The footsteps of our loved ones gone!
For who can say that these are not
Within the portals of the dawn?

THE HIDDEN HAND.

IN Florence, years ago, long spent,
Lorenzo, the Magnificent,
Ruled o'er the people; and he saw
That each and all obeyed his law.
For he was powerful and wise,
And none could take him by surprise.

Among his courtiers, was a man
Much gifted in the arts, to plan
A pageant, bridge, or citadel,
A play, a portico, or well;
With voice that boldly forth could ring,
Whenever he would speak, or sing.

Right well Lorenzo loved the lad,
Who oft his burdened heart made glad,
And helped him with the cares of state,
Yet never seemed importunate;
Contented with his modest pelf,
He asked but little for himself.

But when Lorenzo walked one day
Within his garden, far away,
Beneath the spreading trees, he spied
Young Niccolo, and close beside
Lorenzo's cousin, Jacqueline!
"Now what did this young rascal mean?"

“Did he not know his proper place?
How dared he Jacqueline embrace?”
Unconscious of the fateful stare,
The lovers stood, quite unaware
Of what their turning eyes would find,
A cruel fate, severe, unkind.

“Since duty, girl, you do not know,
Straight to a convent you shall go.
While you, Signor, are banished quite,
E’en though I know that in despite,
You will not finish that new tower,
So grandly rising, hour by hour.

“You hear my words; and now begone!
Nor let me look your eyes upon!
You have abused my confidence,
And showed, besides, a lack of sense
Which never could I quite forgive.
Ah! you are lucky, e’en to *live!*”

The lovers heard, with bated breath,
Well knowing that the doom of death
Might still upon them be pronounced.
They ne’er their plighted vows renounced,
But quickly planned, at close of day,
To meet once more, and steal away.

Years passed. From Rome and Naples came
Accounts of Niccolo's great fame;
That to his work he gave a touch
Of grace, which no one else so much
As rivaled. Greatly in demand,
He traveled far, from land to land.

And with him always went his wife,
Far dearer to him than his life.
She was the inspiration strong
That winged his thoughts and hopes along.
Before her wondrous beauty, bowed,
Where'er she went, the waiting crowd.

Yet did they both for Florence long,
That home of art, and craft, and song;
Until at last, disguised, they dared
To enter, and to see how fared
The city that they found so dear,
For sight of which they banished fear.

Lorenzo still was ruling o'er
The people, proudly, as before.
So quietly they found a place,
Where none would notice either face
As having been, in former time,
Conspicuous in prose or rhyme.

They asked about the lofty tower
Which once Lorenzo, in his power,
Told Niccolo to build. Alas!
The plans destroyed, it came to pass
That no one with sufficient wit
Had yet been found, to finish it.

New plans were offered, now and then,
But quickly cast aside again.
For none, though viewed with eager hope,
Could match the old ones, in their scope.
At last, the trick of circumstance
Now gave to Niccolo his chance.

His plans were sent,—approved as good.
But shrewd Lorenzo understood
At once who sent them, recognized
The hidden hand, although disguised,
And offered pardon to the man
Who could so ably work and plan.

False, false the promise! When he came,
Lorenzo hailed him by his name,
And quickly summoned lancers three,
To take the man in custody.
But Niccolo leaped swift aside,
And to Lorenzo thus replied:

"I saw your treachery before
I left my home to reach your door.
Ten trusty friends of mine without
Will rescue me, beyond a doubt.
And ne'er by any plans of mine
Shall greater glory o'er you shine."

So saying, on the fire near by,
Within a brazier flaming high,
He threw the plans; and striding forth,
He proved what friendship true is worth.
In rushed the ten, with clash of steel,
Which served his exit to conceal.

He swiftly fled away to Rome,
And there henceforth he made his home.
Not even when Lorenzo died,
Did he return; but satisfied
With that which he had done before,
He never entered Florence more.

As for the tower, it ne'er was built.
Around it seemed to hang the guilt
Of treachery, and pride, and woe.
Gone its foundations, long ago!
Men said these went by no command,
But fell, accursed, by hidden hand!

ENTRY OF LUCRETIA BORGIA
INTO FERRARA.

(Feb. 2. 1502)

WITH pomp and majesty she came,—
Her jewels rich and rare,
Her gorgeous gowns, her hated name,
Her shining golden hair.

Men cheered, but wondered, as she passed;
Some dared to whisper low:
The hands of Fate were moving fast,—
Came she as friend or foe?

All honor did the ducal court
Pay this unwelcome bride,
Whose life and fortune seemed the sport
Of evil chance and pride.

But now, at last, in happy scenes,
New life she could begin,—
Let good works silence, by their means,
The tales of crime and sin.

Entry of Lucretia Borgia into Ferrara 29

Alas! she was so young, so young!

In sorrow for her fate

She was not left unknown, unsung,

Although her praise came late.

A vision of the time to come

Shone forth upon her brow;

And as she entered her new home,

So do we see her now.

A smile upon her winsome face,

Yet majesty and power,—

This was the scene naught can displace,

Lucretia Borgia's hour!

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

AS flow the rivers to the sea,
In never-ending streams,
So time, to vast eternity,
Bears all our hopes and dreams.

And in the rivers' constant flow,
Security we find
For all our troubles here below,
The rocks we left behind;

The shallows that we justly feared,
The eddies swift and deep,
The undercurrents, as we neared
The shores where dangers sleep.

Yet, through time's haste, we never win
The chance to do and be
All that we would,—until within
That sea, Eternity.

ALTARS.

HOW many altars do we raise,
Throughout the passing years!
In youth, we strength and beauty praise,
And laughter, free from tears.

Success, in later life, our goal,
And power and riches, too;
Perhaps in strife beyond control,
We spend our forces true.

And only when, with quiet mind,
Such altars made and done,
We lift our waiting eyes, we find
The all-embracing One.

APRIL.

FICKLE? Yes, of course she is;
No one this denies,—
Yet each lover calls her his.
Smiles, and tears, and sighs!

April, to herself most true,
Sets th' whole world aglow.
Doubtless this the reason, too,
Why we love her so!

UPWARD.

FROM the dark sodden earth come the blossoms
of spring;

A promise of happiness truly they bear.

From the chrysalis, butterflies, gorgeous of wing,

Lightly flutter along, through the realms of the air.

From the darkness of sorrow comes ever the light,

Showing clearer the pathway of life, and its goal;

While swift floating upward, on pinions so bright,

The butterfly wings of the heart and the soul.

ENJOYMENT.

WHATEVER good things come, in life,
Three times we should enjoy each one.
Anticipation is the first;
Next consummation follows on,—
Then retrospection gives the chance
To live again the pleasures gone.

THE GODDESS.

WHEN Dian's bow is in the sky,
And tipped with lightning from on high,
The goddess, feeling quite secure,
Full often walks this earth, demure
And cool, as in the days gone by.

But hidden by a passing cloud,
The bow no longer shows her proud
And haughty, though she knows her power
Is felt, e'en through the darkest hour,
And so, she waits, among the crowd.

How can one find in what disguise
She still is seen by mortal eyes?
The moon each lover staunch and true
Shows fair Diana's face in—*you!*
You are his goddess, bright—and wise!

LIFE AND SONG.

THE years go by,
And we descry
In life a startling change;
That which, in youth,
Seemed easy truth,
Now wears an aspect strange.

The sky and sun,
The streams that run,
The rushing wind and rain,
Ourselves, our thought,
Our world, whence brought,
All seemed both clear and plain.

But wonders grew.
The more we knew
The less we seemed to know.
For, like a light,
With greater might
More darkness it can show.

Or as a charm
That works no harm,
Each year an added chime
Shows us how far
Adown we are
The corridors of time.

Yet through the years,
With all their fears,
 Their joys, their troubles sad,
The voice of Hope,
Howe'er we grope,
 Sings out, to make us glad.

And Faith and Love,
Where'er we move,
 Join in the chorus, too,
To make of life,
Through stress and strife,
 A chord of music true.

And thus to live,
We learn to *give*
 The best that in us lies;
While all around,
With joyous sound,
 Sweet melodies arise.

Ah! life is sweet,
And also fleet;
 But whether short or long,
Oh, let us all,
Whate'er befall,
 Still greet it with a song!

THE SNOW MANTLE.

MERRILY the earth is sleeping,
Underneath the snow.
All the plants their watch are keeping,
Waiting time to grow.

Quickly do the snowflakes cover
Softly from our sight
All the bulbs and seedlings over,
With a mantle white.

But the sleepy seeds are humming
Gently in their dreams,
Feeling all the drumming, thrumming,
Coming sunlight beams.

Though they wait a little longer,
In their darkened room,
Life, within them pulsing stronger,
Soon bursts forth in bloom.

THE GREAT RIDDLE.

WHO can know that minds, grown dim,
E'er again shall glow?
Who sees farther than the rim
Of the world we know?

Who can tell that brighter far
Than all earthly light,
May the mind, a brilliant star,
Gleam beyond our sight?

Questions, questions, evermore,
Far past human ken!
Yet we still search hidden lore,—
How? and why? and when?

Of the mysteries beyond,
With their mighty scope,
These thoughts bid us not despond,
Love, and faith, and hope.

WAR MEMORIES.

(*A soldier speaks.*)

OUR thoughts are all too keen,—the dirt and grime,
The awful shock of charging hosts,—the time
When first one's keen-edged bayonet drew blood!
O God! the horror, and the surging flood
Within one's brain! And then,—the lust to kill,
To kill, and show no mercy! Up the hill
And through the rain of fire, still pushing on,
With one desire, to see the conflict done!
The heaps of slain, alike one's friends and foes!
The ghastly horror, once the blood-lust goes!
The scenes in hospitals,—poor husks of men
Just struggling back to life and hope,—and then
The dark eclipse of all,—or else once more
The dismal trench-life that one had before!
Again the dirt and squalor of the scenes
Of daily life! None knows just what this means
Unless he has been there, and lived it all.
And yet, if once again rang forth the call,
For right and justice, gladly would one go,
And fight again the tyrant and the foe.
But since, with pride and honor, now at last
Those dreadful days of battle times are past,
Be merciful in questionings, and let
The soldier, if he can, those days forget!

DOLCE FAR NIENTE.

(THREE PICTURES.)

THE brilliant clouds hang o'er the western sky.
A lad and lassie, on their homeward way
From school, go lightly, as they saunter by,—
All lessons done,—now naught to do but play.

* * * * *

With years gone by,—again the evening light
Shines o'er the two, now man and woman grown.
Forgotten are the daily toil and might
Required; for now the joy of rest is shown.

* * * * *

Still later years bring added comforts' ease;
While books, and music, and the evening glow
Of life, with sweet and happy fantasies,
The *worth* of "dolce far niente" show.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

THE Christmas bells ring out each year,
Upon the frosty air,
Their messages of hope and cheer
And joy beyond compare.

Soft misty waves, like summer flowers
With human kindness fraught,
Sent fragrance upward, with the hours,
Which in the bells were caught.

There closely held, ere downward hurled,
Deep love each echo tells.
Sweet thoughts are scattered o'er the world,
When ring the Christmas bells.

AUTUMN SCHERZO.

DANCE, in the wind and the rain;
Dance, all ye fallen old leaves.
Springtime is coming again,—
Never your spirits it grieves.

Well do ye know that the earth
With mighty forces is rife,
Needing you for a new birth,—
Dance, with the joy of new life!

WITH CAP AND BELLS.

THE play was o'er. The darkened stage
Was all in gloom, with ne'er a light
To show where players' arts engage
To cheer the world, and make it bright.

The merriest of all the train,
The one whose quip and jibe and jest
Brought smiles from which none could refrain,
Sat silent, in the dark, at rest.

Once more, he had amused his world;
Once more the laughter and applause
Had followed each remark he hurled
Across the stage, without a pause.

"Original!" yes, what they said
Was true at present. Would it last?
With each performance, what he paid
In energy, was going fast.

And if it went, what then? what then?
A newer idol! Ne'er a word
For him who had amused them when
He had his strength, would then be heard.

Ah well! Ah well! a little while
At least, he still could jest and play,
And greet the world with mocking smile,
And live his life, from day to day.

Who knew what Fortune had in store?
None could be sure of happiness.
And if some had a little more
Of wealth, perchance they missed success.

So, smiling softly in the gloom,
He scrambled to his feet again,
And recking naught, whate'er his doom,
Went whistling homeward, in the rain.

THE TEMPLE.

THE temple's walls were builded well.
From rock, and mine, and woodland dell,
The spirits of the earth and air
Combined to build this temple fair.

O'er all, their witcheries they cast,
With spells that should forever last;
For buildings are but dull and dead
If laid in fear, and hate, and dread.

Ah, no! with brightest hopes of joy
And faith and hope, without alloy,
Arose these walls, as day by day,
They felt the master-builder's sway.

Built for a glorious new career,
To hearts of womankind most dear,
The chance to give expression true
For all that womankind could do.

As o'er the earth the rising sun
Sheds glowing light for ev'ry one,
So from this temple kindly thought
Went forth, and to the world was brought.

With deeper knowledge, greater power
Each one can find, from hour to hour;
And quickly, too, a common creed
Of kindly thought, and word, and deed.

The wish to *give*, and not to *gain*;
Consideration clear and plain
Of different ideas' weight,
And varying opinions' fate.

For people can not think the same
In ev'rything. No thought of blame
Attaches to a difference
Of sane ideas' common sense.

So, of the many lessons learned,
This one of *toleration*,—spurned
So many years by womankind,
Proves now a mighty force to bind.

And willingly, though sometimes slow,
Appreciation's blossoms grow,
And ev'ry year a deeper tie
Binds all about, in unity.

Desire to help the world along
In peace or war, however strong,
Is greatly aided, when the might
Of many work up towards the light.

Much has been done, and still much more
Will be accomplished than before.
And ever, with a right good will,
The temple's spirits guide us still.

And now a gentle silver haze
Hangs o'er the scenes of other days;
Recalling much, and shining down
On joyful work the years have shown.

All honor to the brilliant minds
That wove this mighty tie that binds,
And built this magic temple well,
Where high ideals always dwell.

And as the years shall roll apace,
And others come within the place,
They, too, shall feel the spirits' call
For love, and hope, and faith for all.

As all good deeds, wherever found,
On waves of ether ever sound,
So what is built so splendidly
Shall ring throughout eternity!

BROKEN CLAY.

UPON the whirling wheel of life,
A sudden pausing in its play!
A wiping out of joy and strife;
And in their places, day by day,
A racking pain, like twisting knife
That glories in its hateful sway!
We feel, alas! with sorrows rife,
Just broken clay,—just broken clay!

SLEEP.

O UR playmate through all of the night's darkest
hours,

Thou art sometimes elusive, and willfully coy;
And yet thou canst chase, with thy magical powers,
All the ills that in daytime our spirits annoy.

Like a butterfly lighting on weary, worn eyes,
We catch thee and hold thee, as though in a net,
And often, perhaps, in our joyful surprise,
To praise thee and bless thee we straightway forget.

REQUITAL.

FULL many passing clouds go by,
For one bright ray of sun;
Full many raindrops from on high,
Before the year is done!

Full many shadows o'er the grass,
Ere buds and leaves can spring!
The nightly dews must come and pass,
For Earth's great blossoming.

Full many notions swiftly go
Across the human mind;
But presently, amidst their flow,
One thought worth while to find!

ALADDIN'S CHOICE.

WHEN Aladdin, in rubbing his magical lamp,
Found the way to his wonderful cave,
He delayed not at all for the dew and the damp,
But followed his trusty old slave.

He followed along, while the lamp's ruddy light
Showed the path straight before them in view,
Like the ray of a wandering star, shining bright,
Or a cloud of a roseate hue.

And the cave held such treasures beyond all compare,
He was dazzled in making his choice;
No monarch, with richest of diadems rare,
Had such jewels the heart to rejoice.

He chose from among them a glittering store,
While over them all was still shed
The light from the lamp, glowing more and yet more,
With the fire of a ruby so red.

And he suddenly saw that the lamp, of itself,
Was the jewel the greatest of all;
For the rest were as nothing but pitiful pelf,
If no light on their beauty could fall.

For diamonds sparkle, and emeralds gleam,
And pearls are as white as the snow,
But love, like a flame, flashes out, in the beam
From the heart of the ruby's red glow.

And love is the magical talisman strong
That gives light, all the length of life's way,
And still with its glory to lead us along,
In its pathway, forever and aye.

HYSSOP.

THRICE happy plant, upheld aloft,
To help the thirst to slake
Of Him the rabble mocked and scoffed,
Who died for all men's sake!

Thy lowly virtues, gladly used,
Still aid the world to-day;
By neither time nor space confused,
Mankind yet owns thy sway.

And blessed by that brief fleeting glance
On thee, the Master gave,
Thou hast, since then, the double chance,
The power to cleanse, and save.

Ah! may our spirits also know
In thought, that mighty grace,
Which still the Master's love can show,
The glory of His face!

THE FLASH.

A SPARK, a glow,
A gleam of light,
A word, to go
Across the night!

A chance, a hope,
A living flame
Of wondrous scope,
And mighty name!

From ages brought,
A whirling breath,
That sounds the thought
Of life, and death!

BENEDICITE.

TO each of us, a kindly fate
Has sometimes spared, when not too late,
To strike the blow prepared to fall,
Upsetting life, o'erwhelming all.

And in our hearts, a deepened joy
Shines o'er the world, without alloy;
And that which wings our thoughts along
Is sometimes prayer—and sometimes song.

THE OSIER BASKET.

TENDERLY a mother's hands
Made this little basket, when
Yet across the seashore sands
Christ still walked on earth with men.

Many osier twigs she took,
Carefully she formed the braid,
Moistened it within the brook,
Wove it watchfully, till made.

From her kinsfolk she had learned
Of a mighty Man, who spoke
Words of eloquence that burned,
Souls that stirred, and hearts that broke.

And if true, what people said,
Always did a blessing come.
Men were raised up from the dead,—
Blind were healed, and deaf, and dumb.

Sorrow-laden souls had hope,
Sins were pardoned; thus indeed,
All the doors of Heaven to ope
For the world, so much in need.

58 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

And of course, true love to show,
 This fond mother wished her son
Could the famous Teacher know,
 Hear and see this Mighty One.

So she sent the little lad,
 And, lest hungry he might be,
Packed the osier basket, glad
 Childish comforts to o'ersee.

Two, three, four, five barley loaves,
 Two small fishes,—boyish touch
In the hills, or forest groves,
 Would not find for him too much.

Even in the desert still
 He might have to go, to find
That great One,—and walk until
 Home was left far, far behind.

Thus she stored the basket well,
 Little dreaming of the chance
Which her simple work befell,
 All its marvelous expanse.

How the gracious Lord beheld
Starving multitudes around;
And, His heart with pity swelled,
Had them seated on the ground.

How He took her scanty store,
Giving it with loving care,
Making of it more and more,
Never stinting each one's share.

How He fed, with blessings good,
Full five thousand souls that day;
Satisfied them all with food,
Sent them comforted away.

And the fragments, gathered well,
Many baskets filled withal;
While the men went forth to tell
Christ's great wonders magical.

This the One the Prophets meant,
Healing deaf, and dumb, and blind,
Promised long ago, and sent
Now at last, to all mankind.

60 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

With the others walked the boy,
And, though hearing what they said,
Understanding not the joy
Over all their spirits shed.

When he reached his home again,
Quick, his mother asked him where
He had left, in grove, or fen,
That small basket, packed with care.

Then his childish tale he told;
That his spirit was not stirred
By the prophecies of old,
Even by the Master's word.

One thing only moved his heart,
Made him all the rest forget,
Basket, bread, or hunger's smart,—
Wondering, with vague regret.

Seeing still that heavenly bright
Splendor, shed around the place,
Glowing like a brilliant light,
Just the glory of His face.

Shining, shining, like a star,
Drawing all the world to Him,
Reaching out afar,—afar,—
Moving not, or growing dim.

Making of the place a shrine,
Nevermore to be forgot;
Wheresoe'er His light should shine,
There would be a hallowed spot.

Giving earthly troubles wings,
Radiating peace and love,
Sanctifying little things,
For a message from above.

Ne'er can aught that light forbid.
Far its rays of hope are hurled,—
In an osier basket hid
Bread of Life for all the world.

THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD.

(1520—1920)

NO stately pageants of the past,
With all their brilliant ranks and powers,
Can equal just a meadow vast
Of lowly dandelion flowers.

Kings proudly showed their cloth of gold,
And passed away,—no longer seen.
But Nature spreads, just as of old,
Her golden mantle o'er the green.

The sun shone o'er their Majesties
Who trod the world beneath their feet;
Now sunlight mocks their braveries,
This newer field of gold to greet.

The world has changed, and we have learned,
Past all the pride of mighty kings,
A deeper thought to be discerned,
The worth of lowly, lovely things!

MOTHER.

WE journey along through this world as we may,
And some hours are merry and bright,
While others are gloomy, with never a ray
To dispel the dark phantoms of night.

Through sunshine or shadow, come weal or come woe,
For each of us still is a place,
Where in joy or in grief we forever may go,
And find peace,—just the smile of a face.

Deep down in the heart, each and every one
Has a spot set apart, like a shrine;
And whatever of good in this world we have done
Is for “Mother,”—your “Mother,” or mine!

A LASTING PEACE.

TWO parts there are to that great song
Which celebrates the Saviour's birth;
The angel voices still prolong
That glorious anthem, "Peace on Earth!"

But ere the world heeds this appeal,
The second part must sound again.
We do not truly think, or feel,
Or know that thought, "Good will towards men!"

THE ROSEBUSH.

A ROSEBUSH green in a garden grew,
More fair with each passing hour;
The sunshine warm and the fragrant dew
Gave her life, and strength, and power.

The birds, on the branches of near-by trees,
With their songs made glad her heart,—
While bees and butterflies strove to please,
And joy to her life impart.

So, nurtured in care, did the rosebush grow,
With never a thought of harm;
Though storms might rage, and the fierce winds blow,
She was sheltered, safe and warm.

And by and by, 'mid her leaves close pressed,
Came a tiny blossom pure,
And the rosebush rejoiced, within her breast,
At her happiness so secure.

For age-long days did the blossom expand;
And its petals of snowy white
Seemed to catch the sun rays spread o'er the land,
And reflect their brilliant light.

66 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

Such pride and joy had the rosebush fair,
 As she glowed, in motherly mirth,
And waved her leaves in the ambient air,
 To the sun, and sky, and earth!

And even old Time, in demanding his toll,
 Though he strewed upon the ground
The leaves of that rose, could not touch its soul,
 In the heart of the rosebush found.

For every rose that fades and falls,
 To the heart of motherhood
Brings a thought that always divinely calls,
 The spirit of all things good.

To every mother is surely brought,
 Though rose-petals day by day
May scattered be, that same lovely thought,
 Her child is her child, *for aye*.

And nothing sweeter in all the world,
 Whether life is hard or mild,
Can be found, than a rosebud half uncurled,
 The heart of a little child.

SEMPITERNAL.

NEW thoughts, new hopes, new aspirations rise,
New melodies, borne on the breath of spring,
The dawn of new ideals in the skies,
On earth fresh hope for ev'ry living thing.

EASTER LILIES.

FAIR as thoughts that upward soar,
On the spirit's wing,
Easter lilies, in their hearts,
Hold the breath of spring;
Rising from the sodden ground,
Fresh new life to bring.

THE ANGEL'S TOUCH.

THE clouds of early morn obscured the sky;
The winds of heaven blew softly o'er the land,—
The peace of utter silence, far and nigh,
Awaited soon the miracle at hand.

Entombed, the Lord of all the World arose,
In strength and glory brought from realms unknown.
And, that untouched, He might His love disclose,
An angel came, to roll away the stone.

O hearts made hard by care, or chained by joy,
Behold the Lord of Life, the Sun of Day!
No doubts or fears can e'er His power destroy,—
His angel's touch shall roll your stone away.

THE SHIELD AND BUCKLER.

NOT guns and cannon roaring loud,
Not bombs and shrieking shells
Alone can win, in conflict proud,
'Gainst well armed citadels.

A shield and buckler greater still
Than all these arms of men
Will give a strength, a glow, a thrill,
Past any human ken.

This shining weapon, held forsooth
With honor, in the fight,
Makes certain victory for truth,
The mighty shield of Right.

A MIRACLE.

THE World was old,—
So old and weary,
Weary unto death.
Generations after generations of men
Had lived their little lives,
Had struggled and hoped,
Had fought and loved, and then,
One and all,
Had gone out into the darkness.
And now the World was old,
And he would fain have slept.

Brooding over the face of the Deep,
He mused,
And his musings were as sad as night.
What was the worth of it all?
The constant struggle,
The fitful flame,
The fleeting pleasures,
And then,—
Darkness and silence!
Hope was a delusive thing,
Love's smile did not always last,
And Duty was stern and cold.

As he still pondered,
Lo! a tiny mist from Heaven descended,
And drew nearer and nearer
To the old World.

And as it came,
The light returned to the eyes of the World,
And Hope again nestled in his heart,
For, as it reached him,
The mist parted,
And behold!
A cradle,
With a fresh new life therein!

And the old World smiled,
And knew that once again
The eternal miracle had been wrought,
And that he should live again
In the little child.

FOLLOWING THE STAR.

WE follow, follow, where it leads,
That star of glory bright.
Above all thought of forms and creeds,
Shines out that heavenly light.

And as, of old, the Wise Men saw
Salvation for mankind,
The reign of peace, and love, and law,
For all who were not blind,—

So we behold its promise true,
And struggle to attain
That light which points the way anew,
The Light of Life again.

ECHOES.

THROUGH mountain fastness deep,
Where rolling sound-waves are,
The uttered thoughts will sweep,
In echoes near and far.

Full oft, a wish sincere
Will find its counterpart,
Expressed, an echo clear,
Deep down in someone's heart.

And nevermore forgot,
For liberty out-hurled,
Shall be that mighty shot
Which echoed round the world.

Ah! none can say how great,
From farthest limits brought,
May be the power of Fate,
To echo each man's thought.

For forces strong, beyond,
This world will still control;
And life will quick respond,
The echo of the soul.

WATERS OF STRIFE.

O WATERS of Strife, which o'er all of the world
Have swept, in deep thunderous streams,
Like a giant, your billows you swiftly have hurled,
And borne away many fair dreams.

Our beliefs in our civilized life are all gone,
Our trust in the virtue of power,
Our faith in the force of a treaty, o'erthrown
In a single dark murderous hour.

You have swept old ideas away in a flood,
You have called for a sacrifice grand;
We are paying in life,—we are paying in blood,—
For a cause that we can not withstand.

A sorrow so heavy it never can rise
Bows down the whole world with its weight;
While tears, blinding tears scorch and burn in our eyes,
Though they watch with hope, early and late.

Ah! bring in exchange, what will make life worth while,
A new world, without and within,—
For prejudice, kindness,—for hatred, a smile,—
Wash away all our folly and sin.

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If so cleansed in our souls, with a purity true,
 We may once again welcome new life
Under better conditions than ever we knew,
 We will bless e'en the Waters of Strife.

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.

JUNE is astir in the fragrant air ;
Blossoms bedeck the scene so fair,—
Robins are singing their gayest song,
Breezes are wafting the sound along.

Merrily flow the rippling rills,
Tumbling adown the distant hills,—
Trees are awake to the joyous sound,
Drawing their life from under ground.

Fairies are dancing across the green,
Only by dullards unheard, unseen,
Piping the world from work, to play,—
Over the hills and far away.

BUTTERFLIES.

MANY happy moments fly
On the winds, 'twixt earth and sky,
Tossed about like thistle-down,
Upwards, downwards, softly blown.
Mortals, whether child or man,
Catch them whensoever you can;
For the while you pause or wait,
Swiftly through the golden gate
Leading to the farthest shore,
They are gone, forevermore.

THE PITY OF IT!

WE pour our millions out before the mighty God
of War,—

We send our aid to stricken souls, our ships from
near and far,

With clothing, food, and help, and kindly thoughts
that never cease.

Why is it that we never did these things in time of
peace?

We sympathize with soldiers, sailors, homeless ones
untold;

We train our nurses, send them forth with comforts
manifold.

Had we no poor and ill before? no halt, or maimed,
or blind?

Alas! that war was needed, so to teach us to be kind!

With but a trifling part of all the thought and money
spent

In making of this Earth a living, human armament,

The strictest search no poor and needy mortals would
disclose;

For all, abundance,—since the world would blossom
as the rose.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

IN melody so clear and true,
Across the unknown sea,
His voice will ever echo through
The halls of memory.

In deep and throbbing waves it floats,
Beyond all stress and strife;
For he has struck those mighty notes,
The chords of Death—and Life.

THE LINK.

BEYOND the farthest firmament,
A mighty force is thrown,
Ethereal, omnipotent,
To hold and keep its own.

Its strength and influence sublime,
From utmost limits brought,
Are shown to those, defying time,
Who know the power of *thought!*

THE GUEST.

IN simple fashion were they wont to place
An extra chair at table, ev'ry day,
That so they might, with heartiness and grace,
Give ready welcoming, without delay,
To friend or neighbor who might come betimes,
Or e'en a stranger passing down the road,
If worn and weary, as it chanced sometimes,
Or burdened down by age's heavy load.

For these were true and kindly souls, who knew
Just what it meant to force a way along
The dusty roads of life, with very few
To say a hopeful word, or right a wrong.
They knew, for theirs had been a hard-won ease;
And many years had passed above their heads
In poverty, while sorrow and disease
Cast heavy shadows o'er them, filled with dreads.

As at their door they stood, they saw, one day,
A wretched little lad was passing by,
So worn and hungry, far too tired to play,
Yet limping on, as if his strength to try.
They took him in, and fed and clothed him well,
And placed him snugly in the vacant chair;
Nor asked him all his story yet to tell,
Until recovered from fatigue and care.

And as they looked upon his features, lo!

There came a wondrous change across his face,
An inward light, that seemed to shine and glow,
A mystic radiancy of peace and grace.

"As unto one of these, so unto Me,"

Rang in their hearts,—and then they looked once
more.

Was this the Master they were blessed to see?

He smiled, then slept,—a boy, just as before.

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE.

THE Crusaders of old had the thought,
As some struggling mortals have now,
That the woes of this world were all brought
By force, before which all must bow.

But ideas have changed; for we know
There are Forces which never can fail;
And these shall all Evil o'erthrow,
In a world where the Right must prevail.

CZAR NICHOLAS II.

AS shines the sun o'er some forsaken tower,
Which stands, a symbol of the mighty past,
So plays the smile upon the lips of power
Whose greatness, withered, could no longer last.

And from the hearts of those who once might crave
The honors and the glory of a throne,
Comes now, from high and low, from prince or slave,
A touch of pity for the greatness gone.

IN FICTION.

WHEN heroines are in a strait,
Or heroes are beset by foes,
When villains prosper, help comes late,
And uppermost are crimes and woes,
Fear not the outcome or the end;
For bear in mind, whate'er betide,
'Mid all their foes, is *one* strong friend,—
They have the *author* on their side!

THE HEART OF LIFE.

THROUGH ice and snow, the heart of life
Is beating warm and strong,
In peaceful homes where hope is rife,
Or battle-fields of deadly strife,
Where right contends with wrong.

Through ice and snow, the sun still shines;
The world yet moves along.
Each heart its own more close enshrines,
The while, with joy that ne'er declines,
Love still sends forth its song.

“NEVER AGAIN!”

HOW many times do we say it,
Laughing, or weeping the while!
Debt, when we struggle to pay it,
Smiles, when we know of their guile!

Memories that we would alter
Show us their saddening side;
And if with these we would palter,
Still they more deeply abide.

Words that we wish we had spoken,
Others much better unsaid,
Vows lightly made, lightly broken,
Deeds for which dearly we paid.

Ah! we may jest, if we like it;
Yet in our hearts, joy or pain,
Pleasure or grief, when we strike it,
Makes us say: “Never again!”

SPINNERS AND KNITTERS.

THE spinners of old, through the livelong day,
When war was abroad in the land,
Were working, with never a thought of pay,
Each one for her chosen band.

And as they were working, and as they spun,
They thought of the homes they loved,
And prayed that speedily wars would be done,
And the right could be finally proved.

The knitters to-day, at their endless tasks,
Are plying their needles swift,
And each, in her inmost spirit, asks
That the nation's dark clouds may lift.

For each has a brother, or husband, or son,
Or some one that she holds dear;
And battles seem easily lost, or won,
For reasons not always clear.

So women, in warfare, have always worked,
Assisting their troops at war;
They have never their duty evaded or shirked,
Whether battles were near or far.

And the dream goes on,—all the ages through,
While never our prayers shall cease,
That at last we may make the vision true,
Spin and knit the world into *peace*.

TO FIRE.

FROM heaven Prometheus stole thee,
To bless, and curse mankind.
Thou givest warmth and comfort;
Thou leavest wreck behind.
Thou art a servant trusty,—
Thou art a master blind.

But always, in thy whispers,
Or in thy roar profound,
Thy stolen source is shown us
In strange, mysterious sound,
Unlike aught else in nature,
Above, or underground.

If e'er Prometheus take thee,
And thou at last expire,
This world will so much miss thee,
Thy help so much require,
That with one voice resounding
Will come the cry for Fire!

AMERICA'S MUSIC.

PRIMEVAL forests whispered it;
The birds took up the song,—
The winds blew o'er the prairie lands,
And carried it along.
The mountains, from their lofty heights,
Flung upward to the sky
The mighty chant of Freedom, like
Great rivers rushing by.

Across the sea, the nations heard,
And answered to the call.
From ev'ry land they hurried fast,
Escaping from the thrall
Of masters hard, or circumstance
That bound them in its chain,
And finding, in the Western World,
The joy of hope again.

The settlers on the mountains, or
The dwellers on the shore,
The Red Men in the forest lands,
The miners' golden ore,—
The right of equal justice shown,
With all it means to men,
Strikes clear the note of Freedom's cry,
Through ev'ry crag and glen.

Ring out, O music of the soul!
Since first the world began,
It voices all the hopes and fears
Within the heart of man.
Where sound the mighty floodgates, from
The hilltops to the sea,
America's great music rings,
The chant of Liberty!

CHRISTMAS STARS.

THE light of stars is o'er the world,
The hush of Christmas night;
The clouds, like smoke-wreaths softly curled,
Pass swiftly out of sight.

The stars proclaim a glory true,
A lasting peace to find,—
The world with reason to imbue,
And freedom for mankind.

As shone the stars o'er Bethlehem,
So shine they still to-day,
More bright than earthly diadem,—
God's laws they all obey.

His justice evermore must reign,
Through pain, and grief, and scars.
Ideals true alone attain
The promise of the stars.

CHOPIN'S UNWRITTEN MUSIC.

SO delicate, ethereal,
And fairy-like, his charm,
That like a web of gossamer,
To keep from earthly harm
Would need such care and thoughtfulness
As only love could bring,
That great magician of the soul,
Supreme o'er ev'rything.

Alas! he thought great Love had come!
He gave his inmost heart,—
He played his finest melodies,
His soul's most wondrous art.
But she, with lightsome laughter filled,
With egotism, and pride,
In stories used his music, then
Forsook him,—and he died.

How many haunting melodies,
How many hopes and fears
Might well have found expression choice,
In other, later years!
Though thankful for what he has done,
And all he left behind,
How can the world forgive *her* for
This loss to all mankind?

THE LEGEND OF ISRAFEL.

TO guard the gates of Eden, angels four
Stood ever watchful, as the hours went by,
To keep away all evil, evermore,
Or aught that would not bless and glorify.

Bold Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael,
With him whose wondrous, ringing, heart-strung
lyre
Accompanied his voice, brave Israfel,
The sweetest singer in the heavenly choir.

In music wrapped, by music led astray,
Delighting all that mighty, heavenly host,
Absorbed in melody, one fateful day,
Grave Israfel a moment left his post.

And in a flash, the Evil, waiting near,
Embodiment of wretchedness and sin,
Saw well his chance, and with a mocking sneer,
The ugly Serpent swiftly glided in.

Then followed sin, unhappiness, and woe,
With all the ills attendant in their train,
With banishment from Eden's happy glow,
The forfeiture of love, the curse of Cain.

Foreknowing this, th' Almighty One ordained
For punishment, wherever Israfel
Might step, or look, or breathe, whate'er pertained
To Life should vanish, under Death's dark spell.

He touched the blossoms near,—they withered quite;
 He watched a singing bird,—it fell down dead.
 The trees, before his gaze, were struck with blight,—
 The grass was sere and yellow, 'neath his tread.

His lyre all broken, and his music mute,
 He threw himself adown, in his despair,
 And cried, in deep abasement absolute:
 "My punishment is more than I can bear!"

Then came the Life-Giver, Emmanuel,
 And touched his arm, and smiled, and gently said:
 "O brother, weep no more, for all is well,—
 I will go *with* thee, and restore thy dead."

His footsteps made the sere grass fresh and green.
 The trees revived,—the blossoms, bright and gay,
 Brought back to life, again adorned the scene.
 He raised the bird which, singing, flew away.

Thus aided, Israfel, no more disgraced,
 In worship knelt, and cast away his fears.
 His hand within Emmanuel's was placed,—
 Together still they journey through the years.

The Resurrection music on his lyre,
 In trumpet strains, sings ever Israfel;
 His deepest note struck with a human fire,
 In adoration of Emmanuel.

OUR NATION.

OUR nation's life to save
From a dishonored grave,
To arms we spring.
Ne'er while Democracy
Holds sway from sea to sea,
Shall we submit to be
Bound by a king.

Our people gathered here,
From countries far and near,
Still shall be true
To all for which we strive,
All that has made us thrive;
To keep our hopes alive,
Our strength renew.

True liberty to show,
And ever stronger grow,
This be our cry :—
For truth, and honor bright,
For justice, peace, and right,
We stand, in freedom's might,
To live or die!

THE WATCHWORD.

THROUGH ev'ry fruitful, rolling plain,
Each river, waterfall,
And mountain, rings the deep refrain,
The watchword over all,
Proclaiming loud, from main to main,
The breadth of Freedom's call.

True liberty! with honor, right,
And justice, for our guide;
Not judgment crushed, beneath the might
Of lordly rank and pride,
Or raised on swords, that rashly smite
All peaceful thoughts aside.

Our people came from near and far,
From ev'ry land on earth.
Democracy's bright leading star
Shall banish war and dearth,
And hearts unlock, and gates unbar,
In lands that gave them birth.

For love of law alone can bring
True freedom in the world.
O'er ev'ry nation let it ring,
Our Country's watchword hurled,
The song of Liberty to sing,
Where'er our flag unfurled!

EASTER.

ROBINS singing, skies of blue,
Swift upspringing blossoms few,
Church bells ringing, accents true,
 Always bringing hope anew;
While a-swinging o'er the dew,
 Thought-waves, winging *me* to *you*.

RESURREXIT.

“CHRIST is risen!” Loud the cry
Sent across the Easter dawn;
Ringing still, through years gone by,
Nevermore to be withdrawn:
“Christ is risen!”

STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

BY the softly flowing river,
On its winding journey down,
While the dancing moonbeams quiver,
Shine the stars o'er Shakespeare's town.

In their light, forever beaming,
Looms the church wherein he lies;
Full of grace and godly seeming,
As of yore, before his eyes.

And the houses then that knew him,
In the fullness of his power,
Still remain, to sadly rue him,
Standing thus, from hour to hour.

Though the Master's life, departed
From their empty, vacant shells
Left his world so broken hearted,
These remain, like hollow bells.

Yet in echoes, music sounding
Still shall flow, like strains of yore,
Carry backward thoughts abounding,
Many hundred years before.

And in shadow, gravely walking,
 'Mid these sweet, familiar scenes,
Soul to soul, in silence talking,
 Shakespeare's self the echo gleans.

For his spirit hovers ever
 Where he loved once to abide;
And in Stratford, one will never
 Fail to find him by one's side.

In the shadows of the moonlight,
 Low before his feet we fall.
Dawn or even, morn or noonlight,
 Mighty Shakespeare—King o'er all!

WAR CLOUDS.

LIKE gulls, screaming loudly across the blue sky,
Fly dark clouds of war, on the wing,
And never a joy in their wake we descry,
For war is a terrible thing.

Ill omened these birds, ill conditioned, as well;
If allowed, they will fast settle down,
With a roar, and a rush, and a funeral knell,
Bringing woe to each hamlet and town.

Then Reason's clear guns, quickly brought, must be
used.

Let their volleys be heard from afar;
Let the Mind of Mankind, with true wisdom infused,
Break and scatter all black clouds of war.

A SPRING IDYL.

O H, Pan may pipe,
And birds may sing
The songs of spring;
But let them bring
Love's prototype,—
For sun will shine,
And joy be ripe,
When you are mine,
My Valentine!

EAST AND WEST.

AS goes the brilliant orb of day,
So empires rise and fall.
From east to west they take their way,
Triumphant over all.

The goal once reached where first begun,
Perchance, with force increased,
Will come again, like shining sun,
New glories from the East.

COURAGE.

IT is good to be brave, in a war ;
It is good to be calm, on the sea,—
Shot and shell flying wild in the air,
Or the waters o'erflowing the lea.

The courage of victory great
Brings the need of restraint, in all power.
Still greater, in loss or defeat,
Is to bear up, in trouble's dark hour.

In a thousand ways, courage the best,
In conflict or trial, is shown.
But the bravery hardest of all
Is—calmly to face the Unknown.

RETROSPECTION.

SO look we back, across the scope
Of years now past and gone;
The stars of Faith, and Love, and Hope
Still leading on and on.

THE OLD CLOCK.

IT stands, defying time,
Yet still accounting, too;
In dignity sublime,
To ev'ry minute true.

And all the planets turn
Around a central sun,
In background blue, where burn
The stars, e'er shining on.

All planets that were known
In those old days now past,—
Yet only six are shown,
For Saturn was the last.

Around the Earth, the Moon
Revolves, as in the sky;
And neither late nor soon,
Pursues its course on high.

Upon its face, the clock
Another moon can show,
With face and eyes that mock
Time's changes, as they go.

Quaint tunes this old clock plays,
On chimes that bravely ring,
As in the ancient days
When George the Third was King.

"Plague on those Wenches," yet
 We echo. "Harvest Home,"
 A dainty "Minuet,"
 And also, "Brave Boys Come."

"The Hounds are all out," and
 "The King of Prussia March,"
 Sweet "Lovely Nancy," grand,
 Coquettish, droll, and arch.

"Dear Cloe, give me sweet
 Kisses," "Freemason's Health,"
 "The Pilgrim," obsolete,
 "The Hemp Dressers," for wealth.

The world has changed; still we
 That hear these old tunes ring
 Men of the past can see,—
 And join "God save the King."

For George, Fifth of the name,
 The ancient chords now sound.
 Their meaning is the same,
 Although the years go round.

So stands this clock, with mien
 Untouched by mode or art;
 It views all life serene,—
 Of Time, itself a part.

A LILAC GLIMPSE.

LILACS, with branches slender,
Up on the hillside grow.
Thither, with footsteps tender,
Lovers are wont to go.

Seated 'neath lilacs, naught heeding,
Lover and maiden fair!
He, with a manner pleading,
She, with a downcast air.

Quickly we passed, ne'er knowing
Whether he lost or won,—
Only the lilacs showing
Under the noonday sun.

SPRING'S PROMISE.

(A Valentine.)

DANCING o'er the meadows,
Smiling through the snow,
Spring, o'er Winter's shoulder,
Whispers soft and low.

Telling of the Summer,
In whose mighty train,
Buds, and birds, and blossoms
Charm the world again.

Best of all the glories
'Neath those skies of blue,
Love with joy is singing,
Summer brings us—*you!*

THE VISION.

LIFT up my soul above life's stress
And storm, to dreams of happiness,
Where vexing cares no more distress,
But Hope and Faith my spirit bless;
Lift up my soul!

Up to the Mount, where I may see
The vision of the figures three;
The central form, Divinity,
Still blessing all, with Charity,—
Lift up my soul!

FOUND.

MAGNIFICENT in strength and beauty rare,
From out the solid earth the statue came;
Exhumed with infinite research and care,
An ancient god, in face, and form, and name.

As if disdaining all the hopes and fears
Of mortals, do the lips divinely smile;
Although, since long ago, no prayer he hears,—
His broken shrines no more the world beguile.

And if those lips could speak, what would they say?
Perchance this altered world would look so grim
That he would sadly wish to hide away
Within the earth again, 'mid shadows dim.

Unknown, contemned, from former life estranged,
Who would not much prefer the friendly ground
Or deepest sea, which rolls for aye unchanged,
Where neither gods nor mortals can be found?

SWIFTER THAN THE WIND.

THE Wind is a rover, we know;
He visits each leaflet and flower,
He whirls up the mountains of snow,
He scatters the drops of a shower.

Yet I will forgive him his pranks,
And never my mind let him scare,
But give him my heartiest thanks,
If a message to you he will bear.

He must tell you that every day,
As he spreads out his pinions to fly,
Before he is fairly away,
In my thoughts, all his speed I outvie.

For swifter than aught else beside
Is a love that is loyal and true.
Though many the miles that divide,
I am daily and hourly with you,—
I am daily and hourly with you!

AS SINGS THE WIND.

AS sings the wind across a sun-lit plain
A throbbing chant of music, soft and low,
So happy memories, in sweet refrain,
Recall the pleasant days of long ago.

And often, as the wind-swept music rings,
Within our hearts there comes a mighty thrill;
Of deeds of valor joyfully it sings,
And calls on us its promise to fulfill.

Within the years that leave their fateful mark
On all mankind, for good or evil trace,
To voices of the past we gladly hark,
Yet look the future bravely in the face.

As did our ancestors, in times gone by,
So we to emulate their doings strive.
In peace or war, consistently we try
To think what they would do, if still alive.

And sometimes, when the curtain of the past
Is blown aside a little, and we see
What struggles, pain, and anxious days at last
Grew bright again, we smile right joyously.

What man hath done, so man can do once more,—
Bring order out of sad, chaotic days.
And thus we scan again the ancient lore,
And give our forefathers due meed of praise.

They wrestled with the problems of their time
As we with ours; and if we do as well,
Our country may to heights of glory climb,
In peace secure, past shock of shot or shell.

Yet stirring winds of destiny have blown
Across our world, and changed its life and thought.
No longer can we selfishly disown
Another's burdens, to our notice brought.

We have, indeed, to learn the ancient rule,
To do for others as we would that they
Should do for us, if in life's changing school
Our rôles were just reversed, the other way.

So shall the world be gladdened by our aid,
So shall it be a better place to live;
And we ourselves, a thousand times repaid,
For all the joy and happiness we give.

O mighty forces, blowing through the world,
How may we best your strength and glory learn?
How on your flowing banners, all unfurled,
Inscribe the thoughts with which our spirits burn?

118 **The Cry of Vashti and Other Verses**

Teach us the past, in all its fruitful power,
 But give us future hope and courage too;
So that the darkest or the brightest hour
 May find us loyal, ready, staunch, and true.

Thus our belovèd country, year by year,
 Upheld shall be, where'er she might have sinned;
While from remotest regions she shall hear
 Her song of triumph borne upon the wind!

TO AN AZTEC GOD.

MISSHAPEN, bowed, distorted, old,—
What thought of man could be
The maker of thy fate untold,
Thy hideous mystery?

From out the shadows of the past
Thou comest to our view,
A nightmare horror, that was cast
Full many ages through.

Ah, then thou hadst a mighty power
The souls of men to sway!
Now none regret thee, or the hour
That drove thy kind away!

THE GYPSY TRAIL.

IF I were a Gypsy, to follow the trail,
And you would come after, with me,
Our footsteps should wander o'er mountain and vale,
And even across the deep sea.

In the far trackless desert, the path of the sun,
Which outshines all the glories of earth,
Should be trod by our feet, that so swiftly would run
To follow the Goddess of Mirth.

No dark gloomy clouds should envelop our way;
No worries embarrass our hearts.
For light as a bird, on the branches that sway,
The shadow of trouble departs.

I will wrap you around in a mantle of light;
I will cherish each fanciful thought.
Your happiness never shall vanish from sight,
Since deep in my heart it is wrought.

Then follow, oh follow this wonderful trail!
Let the world and its pageantries go.
My love is a beacon that never shall fail;
All the world with its light is aglow!

PROPHETS.

VOICES raised to speak the Word,
Through the centuries are heard,
Telling of the needs of man,
With a warning, curse, or ban.

Loudly do the prophets cry,—
Claim their words are from on high.
Yet their sayings, if they last,
Show the future from the past!

THE FOURFOLD STRAND.

TO draw us heavenward on our way
There is a fourfold strand,
With mighty power our course to sway,
And at our sure command.

Of Truth, and perfect Honesty,
And Justice, kindly weighed,
To which is added Purity,—
Of these the strand is made.

We may not fully find or know
Perfection, in our lives.
But guiding us, where'er we go,
This strand our hope revives.

For whosoe'er its strength will try,
To carry out life's plan,
Will find that on its force rely
All laws,—of God, and man.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

THE voice of one who cried aloud
From out the wilderness:
“Repent! Repent!” The passing crowd,
The rich and poor, the low and proud,
With heads aloft, or shoulders bowed,
All sought for happiness.

He fain would make them see how blind
Were all those earth-bound eyes,
That turned aside, with words unkind,
Or mocking sneers that thrust behind
The hope true happiness to find,
Eternal Life’s great prize!

THE SECRET OF THE PINES.

WITH breath of summer in their branches held,
The pine trees keep a secret in their hearts.
They know that when they finally are felled,
And when the joy of summer time departs,
They are the trees, forever fresh and green,
That chosen are, to bear the Christmas gifts;
With light of shining candles o'er the scene,
And spicy perfumes that belie the drifts
Of snow without, and tell of summer days.
So in the forest, through the seasons slow,
They gather strength, and joy, and love, to praise
Their great Creator, in their Christmas glow.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

STILL does the troubled pool of mercy flow;
Still to its waters do the people go,
The lame, the blind, the ill of ev'ry sort,
There, in the hope of health, they all resort.

And who shall say, if healing springs abound,
They are not like an angel's touch, when found?
Or who would turn away from any grace
By mercy shown, in whatsoever place?

The cleansing water, or the healing word,
However sin-sick hearts and souls are stirred,
Praised be Bethesda, with its fountain cool,
The House of Mercy, and the Flowing Pool!

AND PILATE WASHED HIS HANDS.

“**I** FIND no fault in Him!” thus Pilate said,
And washed his hands before the multitude;
But yet allowed the Master to be led
Away to dreadful death, with shame imbued.

So runs the story, all the ages through.
Yet who shall say what qualms of conscience came?
Or how he later wished he might undo
His acts and words of cowardice and shame!

With Cæsar ever present in his mind,
The ruler of the world, from whom he held
His office, and with Herod, too, to find
What fault he could,—thus Pilate’s will was felled.

“His blood on us shall be!” cried out the Jews;
And Pilate hearkened to their shrill demands,
Yet knew their clamor still he might refuse,
And that the life of Christ was in his hands.

Through years of deeply conscience-stricken thought
Did Pilate bear his memory of sin;
But never gained the solace that he sought,
For troubled visions flamed his breast within.

Upon the distant mountain-height that bears
His name, Pilatus, did the wretched man
At length make end of all his sins and cares,
In death still carrying his curse and ban.

Ah! not enough it is for those in power,
When dealing with infuriated bands,
That they evade the issues of the hour,
And put aside the truth, and "wash their hands!"

TO THE STATUE OF LIBERTY
IN NEW YORK HARBOR.

CRASHING of thunder-bolts hurled from on high,
Roar of explosives sent out from below,
Lightnings out-flashing, across sea and sky,
Strong buildings shaken, or felled by the blow,—
Calmly aloft, by no tumult enswirled,
Liberty's torch still enlightens the world.

By no tempestuous whirlwinds of thought,
Plottings or schemings, without or within,
Shall our great Country to sorrow be brought,
While we give light to the world we would win.
Wide is our banner of freedom unfurled.
Liberty still shall enlighten the world!

THE ISLE OF DAY.

A TINY island in the Sea of Time,
Each day is like a world, set far apart,
Where one may hear of other hours the chime,
But where Life's chance is new, for 'ev'ry heart.

A SPAN.

A BRIDGE across the stream,
Some joy, much strife,
The passing of a dream,—
And this is life.

BALLADES, RONDEAUX, ETC.

8

BALLADE OF FRIAR TUCK.

A SOUTHERN wind and cloudy sky,
The blast of horns across the vale,
An arrow sent with truest eye,
That ne'er could falter, swerve, or fail,
Then Friar Tuck they quickly hail!
They bid me give their thanks, and pray
That they may never land in jail,—
And “Pax vobiscum!” then I say.

Should Robin Hood by chance descry
A traveler, with escort frail,
But good fat purse he could untie
With little trouble to entail,
Although his fate he might bewail,
Forsooth, none can bold Robin stay.
The man departs, with visage pale,—
And “Pax vobiscum!” then I say.

In truth, such deeds to justify,
The poor are helped,—the wealthy quail,—
For Robin never would deny
The balance, in the common scale;
As Little John and Allan Dale
Will gladly swear, in accents gay.
They follow fleetly in his trail,
And “Pax vobiscum!” then I say.

Envoy.

Ah! who at life and fate would rail?
Fat comfort drives dull care away,—
A venison steak and nut-brown ale!
And “Pax vobiscum!” then I say.

VERNAL MAGIC.

(Ballade.)

GONE is the winter's blast,—
Soft rains the earth bedew;
The buds are swelling fast,
And bringing into view
The leafy avenue,
Where birds are on the wing,
And swift their course pursue,
Brushed with a gleam of spring.

No longer overcast
The sky, with clouds that threw
Their shadows deep and vast;
For strong the sun-rays drew,
With hidden purpose true,
Fresh life and light to bring
The waiting earth—and *you*,
Brushed with a gleam of spring.

All gloomy days are past,—
 Away they swiftly flew.
Joy, *joy* has come at last,—
 For like a bugle blew
The tones that louder grew,
 To make the whole world sing,
And mirth all hearts imbue,
 Brushed with a gleam of spring.

Envoy.

Magician, lead thy crew,—
 The world is following,
With hope and courage new,
 Brushed with a gleam of spring.

BIBLIOFACTURE.

(Ballade.)

WHEN first upon the printed page
Man learned his phrases to indite,
Indeed, it was a wondrous age;
And this invention with delight
Was hailed by all, save those whose spite
Feared failure for the books they penned.
These now are cherished in our sight,—
Of making books there is no end.

When Chaucer could his world engage,
That world of pageantry and might,
His newest poems were the rage
With courtiers, matrons, maidens slight;
Or Froissart's Chronicles of fight,—
How "Edward made the French King bend."
Time o'er these tales has thrown a blight.
Of making books there is no end.

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And now, at last, upon life's stage,
 There comes a flood's o'erwhelming plight.
Each writer thinks himself a sage,
 And books are piled to mountain height.
Where are the last year's stories bright?
 A thousand books show later trend.
A name will hardly last o'er night,—
 Of making books there is no end.

Envoy.

Thrice happy those, contented quite
 With Fame's or Fortune's dividend,
Who just for joy of writing, write!
 Of making books there is no end.

BALLADE OF ADVENTURE.

THOUGH moralists ably may preach
Of the dangers of life to beware,
Though pedagogues truly may teach
That the world has full many a snare,
Yet lightly as billows of air,
Though sometimes these breezes are shrill,
Do young spirits for all things prepare,
For Youth is adventurous still.

Years ago, in old Athens, the speech
Of wise Socrates, critics declare,
Should have molded opinions of each
Of the persons surrounding his chair.
But in wisdom, he did not forbear
To reckon life's glory and thrill;
And to-day in this thought we all share,
For Youth is adventurous still.

When Argosies moored on the beach,
 When Columbus had courage to spare,
When Hawkins and Drake were in reach
 Of the Spanish, with never a scare
Their courses they followed; and where
 Luck failed them, they trusted to skill.
Their valorous torches yet flare;
 For Youth is adventurous still.

Envoy.

O World, filled with doubting and care,
 Young hearts will forever fulfill
Their mission, to do and to dare,
 For Youth is adventurous still.

THE MUSIC OF AMERICA.

(Ballade.)

FROM ev'ry fertile hill and plain,
'Neath ev'ry sky, or dark, or blue,
Where sweep the miles of golden grain,
Or fields and farms of verdant hue,—
With whippoorwill, or cockatoo,
With lark, or gulls upon the sand,
Ring melodies both clear and true,
In waves of music o'er the land.

The sounding breakers lash the main.
Fed by vast rivers not a few
Great waterfalls will roar again,—
And through the ages these will do
As they have done the ages through.
With majesty on ev'ry hand,
Sound wondrous strains, 'mid mist and dew,
In waves of music o'er the land.

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The mountain-dwellers oft are fain
 To sing the songs of rack and rue;
Though sometimes still a glad refrain
 Will pierce the clouds of life askew,
And give the glories that accrue
 To happy, cotton-working band,
Where Southern melodies first flew
 In waves of music o'er the land.

Envoy.

America, a world-wide cue
 Thou givest,—for at thy command,
All nations join, with hope anew,
 In waves of music o'er the land.

BALLADE OF COURAGE.

FIERCE Gessler gave command:
“Now show your skill!” said he;
And with malicious hand
He placed, for all to see,
An apple, from a tree
Near by, as target fell,
On th’head so young and free,
The son of William Tell.

But Tell, with gesture grand,
Threw down his bow. “For me,
Whate’er my reprimand,
This action shall not be.
Not e’en for liberty,
Shall you this deed compel,
’Gainst him such villainy,
The son of William Tell!”

But quickly then his stand
The boy took fearlessly.
"Your arrow safe will land,—
Fear not the treachery
Of this, your enemy.
Take aim. All will be well."
Right gayly rang his plea,
The son of William Tell.

Envoy.

Which of these people three
In courage did excel?
Methinks, in verity,
The *son* of William Tell!

THE DAYS GO BY.

(Rondeau.)

THE days go by, like drifting rain,
And carry with them, in their train,
Both joy and sorrow, pride and woe,
The love of friend, the hate of foe,
A world of happiness and pain.

And to each one of us made plain,
Beyond all thought of loss or gain,
Is certainty, or fast or slow,
The days go by.

Though kingdoms may be torn in twain,
Or fall beneath ambition vain,
The sun still shines, the breezes blow,
O'er summer flowers, or winter snow.
The sway of Time shall e'er remain!
The days go by.

THE CALL OF THE PIXIES.

(Rondeau.)

DIDST ever try, just for a day,
To thrust all cares of life away,
And follow not one single rule
That makes of life this daily school,—
But like a child, just frankly play?

The magic of the woods, in May!
Along a running stream to stray,
Or dream beside a mountain pool!
Didst ever try?

Perchance 'neath music's happy sway,
Or clever drama, bright and gay!
Though heroes win, or play the fool,
And though the world may ridicule,
Care not at all what they may say!
Didst ever try?

THE DECISION.

(Rondeau.)

OR yes, or no,—which shall I say?
The skies are bright and clear to-day,
But by to-morrow, they may be
Obscured by clouds; for none can see
The future, dangers to allay.

Perhaps an easy path, and gay
And happy, for my footsteps, may
Be mine, in this decision free,—
Or yes, or no.

And yet,—perhaps wild storms will play
Around me, and my life will sway
And fall, as would a broken tree.
Ah, well! I follow Fate's decree,—
Love must decide,—the only way,—
Or yes, or no.

IN MANY KEYS.

(Rondeau.)

IN many keys, the chords of life
Are struck, the notes of war and strife,
A song of love, a lullaby,
A hymn of praise, a moan, a cry,—
With human sounds the world is rife.

The tones ring out, of drum and fife,
That touch the heart of maid or wife
With fear,—yet joy, which they imply,
In many keys.

The sharp winds blow, a cutting knife
Across the sails of scudding skiff,
Or through the poor man's scant supply.
And yet, our souls we fortify,
And ask, here and hereafter, *life!*
In many keys.

ALONG THE PATH.

(Rondeau.)

A LONG the path where many feet
Have traveled far, adown the street.
Beneath the overarching sky,
There comes the turn of Destiny,
The road where past and present meet.

And none can tell, (for Time is fleet,)
How soon may come success complete;
Or dire misfortune may be nigh,
Along the path.

Oh, youth and hope and joy are sweet,
And gladly do their spirits greet
The coming years; with ne'er a sigh,
With merry thoughts, and courage high.
Yet none may hope the Fates to cheat,
Along the path.

LIFE'S CHANCES.

(Rondeau.)

THE years go on. We mark their flight
Across the shadows of the night.
They carry with them joy and pain,
The links of Time's unending chain
That binds the world, in its despite.

And some are years of deep delight,
While some but bring a sorry plight;
Yet none of them are all in vain.
The years go on.

Our own they are,—to use or slight,—
Which none can take, by force or might.
And if we can not quite attain
Our dearest hopes, of heart or brain,
We have each day our chance in sight.
The years go on!

IN FEUDAL TIMES.

(Rondeau.)

IN feudal times, to make and give
A silken scarf each maid would strive;
And so to send her warrior forth,
To east or west, or south or north,
That love, though far away, might thrive.

With patient art would she contrive,
In ways not too demonstrative,
To show her own affection's worth,
In feudal times.

Not always did his love survive.
Perchance he wore another gyve
On his return. Ah, well! this earth
Could yet be made a place of mirth,
And life was still worth while to live,
In feudal times.

THE MORNING SKY.

(Rondeau.)

THE morning sky, of vivid rose,
With bands of blue that half disclose
The stars, so lately shining there,
Now fading in the matin air,
The way of life and beauty shows.

The early glory quickly goes.
It vanishes before one knows
Or realizes just how fair
The morning sky.

For as the brighter sunlight grows,
Life's greater splendors to expose,
It brings not only joy, but care.
Yet burdens easy are to bear,
If always, in one's spirit, glows
The morning sky.

THE MAYFLOWER.

(Rondeau.)

THE mayflower brings its beauty fair
To scatter fragrance on the air,
And with its dainty, springtime glow,
The summer's promises to show,
With wealth of bloom, and blossoms rare.

Ah! justly named, beyond compare,
That ship that sailed, to do and dare!
New hope, alike to friend and foe,
The Mayflower brings.

Full many trials, grief and care
That goodly shipload had to bear.
No wonder that our hearts o'erflow
With gratitude, for all we owe;
To each of us, a special share
The Mayflower brings.

A SMILE.

(Rondeau.)

A SMILE is like a ray of sun
That warms the heart of ev'ry one;
Or like the parting of a cloud
That throws a gleam across a crowd,
From hidden glories half begun.

And though we may not rue or run,
Or fear the shadows dark and dun,
We know what, on a spirit proud,
A smile is like.

On saint or sinner, monk or nun,
Where'er the web of life is spun,
Or free, or grudgingly allowed,
On youthful lips, or wrinkle-plowed,
We seek for what, in work or fun,
A smile is like.

THE SIBYL.

(Rondeau.)

WITH brooding eyes, her scroll in hand,
The pagan prophetess, o'er land
And sea, sent forth her word of doom,
For good or ill, for joy or gloom,
And none her mandate could withstand.

What was the force at her command,
Which scattered ships upon the strand,
Or caused the flower, success, to bloom,
With brooding eyes?

Would that we had a modern brand
Of Sibyl, still with manner grand,
To read portentous signs that loom,
And tell how peace can e'er find room,
And hearts grow light, and thoughts expand,
With brooding eyes!

AMID THE REEDS.

(Rondeau.)

AMID the reeds, the great god Pan
Sat piping for each maid and man
Who chanced to pass along that way;
And with his flute he bade them stay,
And listen to his merry plan.

With eager joy the tune began,—
It told of life, and its brief span,
And bade all sing a merry lay,
Amid the reeds.

And sometimes, as magicians can,
He gathered round him quite a clan,
All ready for his joyous play,
And for his melodies so gay,—
When lo! A flash! Away he ran,
Amid the reeds!

APPLES.

(Rondeau.)

AN apple brought, in Eden's prime,
All human ills,—disease and crime,
And sorrow, which such things entail.
But life is short, and flesh is frail,
And apples tempt, in ev'ry clime.

When Paris, on the mount sublime,
Chose Venus, (in that Goddess mime,)
The fall of Troy, 'mid shadows pale,
An apple brought.

Th'Hesperides' gold apples' chime
Caused many journeys maritime,—
Made fleet-foot Atalanta fail.
Ah, fateful deeds, along its trail,
Told through the years, in prose and rhyme,
An apple brought!

THE BELLS OF TIME.

(Rondeau.)

THE bells of Time sound not in vain,
When in their echoes, clear and plain,
Ring memories the years have brought,
With friendship, love, and duty fraught,
And joy, that follows in their train.

We listen to each passing strain,
Not as the chance for sordid gain,
But as a song, divinely taught
The bells of Time.

Let future years sweep on amain,
And bear us swiftly in their chain;
If but the force of kindly thought
And friendly deeds in hope are wrought,
We still may hear Life's sweet refrain,—
The bells of Time!

ENMESHED.

(Rondeau)

WITHIN Life's net, like Circe's Isle,
Are stirring forces that beguile
And cheat us daily, as we go,
In all the flush of youthful glow,
Or passing years, each added mile.

Escape? Perhaps a little while
The Siren may withdraw her smile;
But only deeper spells to throw
Within Life's net.

And though her tricks we may revile,
Or seek fresh knowledge to compile,
We never can her sentence know,
But still must live the daily show.
We ne'er her ways can reconcile,
Within Life's net.

AS SHINES THE SUN.

(Rondeau.)

AS shines the sun o'er lands afar,
Where lightly waving palm trees are,
And blossoms of a gorgeous hue
Bedeck the scene, and charm the view,
So life allures, with naught to mar.

Soft wavelets wash the sandy bar,
Where dancing skiffs, with sail and spar,
Go gayly by, a merry crew,
As shines the sun.

From ukelele, or guitar,
Sweet music sounds, with ne'er a jar,
And there, 'mid inspirations new,
Fresh life and joy are waiting, too,
Each glowing mind a brilliant star,
As shines the sun.

WINTER MUSIC.

(Rondeau.)

O'ER fields of snow, the rushing wind
Sings in the blast of blizzard blind,
While pulsing tree-tops madly shake,
And white-stringed bushes wildly quake,
The diapason full to find.

Each brook and stream, though icy lined,
Sounds forth, above, below, behind,
Soft tinkling music still to make,
O'er fields of snow.

None should the winter call unkind,
When glorious, swirling snow-storms bind
The world, for deep-drawn music's sake,
In harmonies that tensely wake
The deepest depths of human mind,
O'er fields of snow.

INSPIRATION.

(Rondeau.)

THE inner life, so fair to greet!
Where one may walk with eager feet,
Escaping from all fret and care,
And all annoyances, that wear
Upon the soul, its hope to cheat.

Ah! there one finds a safe retreat;
With loved companions sure to meet,
Who all one's dearest thoughts may share,
The inner life.

And then, to make it quite complete,
You always come, on pinions fleet,
A shining form, with waving hair,
And smile and glance beyond compare.
No wonder that to me is sweet
The inner life.

OCTOBER LEAVES.

(Rondeau.)

OCTOBER leaves, of yellow, brown,
Or brilliant red, are Autumn's crown,
The jewels of the passing year,
That shine in sun-rays bright and clear,
Bedecking field, and wood, and town.

Gay smiling thoughts, with ne'er a frown,
Shall follow, when they flutter down;
For memories of joy and cheer
October leaves.

We claim its glory for our own,
Its future promises foreshown;
The coming days with hope appear,
To give us all we hold most dear,—
And so, we place in high renown
October leaves.

HOW GOES THE TIME?

(Rondeau.)

HOW goes the time? We can not say
How many moments ev'ry day
We spend in pleasant thoughts or dreams.
And if to us the daylight seems
But short, we ne'er its course can stay.

Right gladly do we work and play,
And pass the happy hours away;
Then swiftly come the sunset beams.
How *goes* the time!

Ah! possibly each sunny ray
Is not quite lost, though it may stray
Afar,—for sometimes it redeems
A thought, that works out larger schemes.
Then shall the outcome well repay.
How goes the time?

ACROSS THE MARNE.

(Rondeau.)

A CROSS the Marne they shall not pass,
That seething, surging, murd'rous mass,
Gone out upon their frantic fray,—
In truth, the Devil's holiday,
Where Right is crushed, like shattered glass.

Blood-strewn, and scattered o'er the grass,
Torn limbs, and helmet, sword, cuirass,
With gun, or pike, to bar the way
Across the Marne.

The sound goes forth from blaring brass,
That rings recall; but not, alas!
Before the blood-soaked, sodden clay
Becomes an altar. There shall pray
All nations' heroes,—ev'ry class,—
Across the Marne.

FROM THE TRENCHES.

(Rondeau.)

IN peace or war, my darling's face,
So full of sweetness, strength, and grace,
Shall be my inspiration, guide,
And comfort, whether by her side,
Or far away, in distant place.

No counsel vacillating, base,
Or timid, would she give, in case
Of Duty's call, whate'er betide,—
In peace or war.

Her smile all doubts away can chase;
For love can fly through realms of space,
And fill with thoughts of joy and pride
True hearts, that naught can e'er divide.
Her dreams would paths of glory trace
In peace or war.

THE LEADER.

(Rondeau.)

A LEADER brave, both strong and true,
You cheerfully your way pursue,
With manner bland, and welcome free,
To all, of whatsoe'er degree,
That come within your favored view.

You ask no odds, yet still anew,
Your smiling eyes claim as their due
Affection, trust, and sympathy,—
A leader brave!

And if we ask what is the clew
To this regard, shown only few,
The answer, plain for all to see,
Is that we know the world can be
In peace, or war, *quite sure* of you,
A leader brave!

THE BRIDGE OF DREAMS.

(Rondeau.)

THE bridge to cross a flowing stream
We oft but scantily esteem,
And pass it lightly, day by day,
As in our work, or in our play,
We follow each his own heart's scheme.

And yet, in shining sunlight's gleam,
It forms of thought a magic theme.
O'er time and space my love may stray,
The bridge to cross.

Thus oft she comes, my joy supreme,
With hope that she may soon redeem
In person, what her sweet lips say,
Far down the pleasant winding way,
By day in thought, by night in dream,
The bridge to cross.

SAINT VALENTINE.

(Rondeau.)

SAINT VALENTINE, upon his day,
Tells all the world at love to play,
Forgetting life is not a dream,
Where things are always what they seem,
And ev'ry thought is bright and gay.

We fain would let him have his say,
And dream our happy life away,
For no one ever should blaspheme
Saint Valentine.

Yet now and then, with blank dismay,
We realize how hopes betray,
And lead us on, to bliss supreme,
To happy heights of joy extreme.
Ah! *does* she love me? yea or nay,
Saint Valentine?

PEGASUS.

(Rondel.)

O WINGÈD courser of the skies,
So hard to catch and curb at will,
Beyond the utmost power and skill
Of him who on himself relies!

Yet art thou kind to him who cries
With humble voice, o'er rock and rill,
O wingèd courser of the skies,
So hard to catch and curb at will.

But he upon thy wings who flies,
Though merely o'er a trifling hill,
Can feel fore'er thy throb and thrill
Which ev'ry joy in life outvies.
O wingèd courser of the skies,
So hard to catch and curb at will!

PERSEUS TO ANDROMEDA.

(Rondel.)

SET free at last, belovèd one,
From monster's fangs, and rock and chain,
From lashing waves, and beating rain,
From darkened night, and burning sun!

Again for you has life begun;
You live no more in dread and pain.
Set free at last, belovèd one,
From monster's fangs, and rock and chain!

Ah! while the hours of life shall run,
My true devotion shall remain,
To guard and shield; for not in vain
Kind Fate for us her web has spun.
Set free at last, belovèd one!

LAUDAMUS.

(Roundel.)

GIVE thanks and praise for health and food,
For books, for music,—peaceful days,
That keep our hearts in happy mood,
Give thanks and praise.

Through passing storms, or sunny rays,
Through field and fallow, flow and flood,
Our steps are led in pleasant ways.

To be by friendship understood,
To know a love that naught dismays,
This is the sum of all things good.
Give thanks and praise!

THE VEXED QUESTION.

(Sonnet.)

“**W**HAT is to be will be!” So runs the creed
Of many, who would doubt that any one
Could change whatever had been ordered done
By that great Power above each word and deed.
For though we follow, each and all, the lead
Of our own knowledge, yet in truth, by none
May all the favor of the Fates be won,
And in this world of chance, but few succeed.

And still, each time the question comes to us,
Shall this or that be done? we justly feel
We have the choice within us, what to say.
We know our wills are free, whatever thus
The everlasting puzzle may conceal.
Free will or Fate? Which holds us most in sway?

PROMISES FULFILLED.

(Sonnet.)

A BREATH of laughter o'er the waiting land !
For Spring has come, in all her glory bright,
And chased afar the shadows of the night,
And all the terrors of the icy band
That held the earth in thrall, like some dark hand
Across the splendor of the glowing light,
Which brings the happiness of day to sight,
With work, and play, and joy, at its command.

Again the resurrection of the world,
A symbol of the promise to mankind,
Makes ev'ry heart and mind and soul rejoice;
While breezes, over hills and valleys hurled,
Go forth, to chase the flying clouds, and find
The ringing, mighty hope, in Nature's voice!

THE RACE.

(Triolets.)

“**I** LIKE a race,” said Mistress Nan,
As high her pretty head she tossed.
“Will no one for my pleasure plan?
I like a race,” said Mistress Nan.
Forthwith we mustered, man to man,—
We would not have her wishes crossed.
“I like a race,” said Mistress Nan,
As high her pretty head she tossed.

We did not rue that race we ran,
Or care if it was won or lost.
E’en from the first, when it began,
We did not rue that race we ran;
For just the smile of Mistress Nan
Was worth the trouble that it cost.
We did not rue that race we ran,
Or care if it was won or lost.

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Ah! by and by a race we ran.

How terrible, if I had lost!

The prize? The heart of Mistress Nan.

Ah! by and by a race we ran

Which meant for me a lifelong span

Of joy, that nothing could exhaust.

Ah! by and by a race we ran.

How terrible, if I had lost!

JUST SUPPOSE.

(Triolets.)

JUST suppose that you and I
On a sea-girt isle were thrown,
Over us a soft blue sky,—
Just suppose that you and I,
Glad of our escape, should try
Building huts of shells and stone.
Just suppose that you and I
On a sea-girt isle were thrown.

Just suppose that soon drew nigh
Boats, across the shallows blown,
That our island could descry.
Just suppose that soon drew nigh
Chance of transport, safe and dry,
To the homes that we had known.
Just suppose that soon drew nigh
Boats, across the shallows blown.

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Just suppose we should comply;
 Would our dreamings all have flown?
Ah! on *some* we could rely!
Just suppose we should comply;
Would you leave, without a sigh,
 Skies and sunsets all our own?
Just suppose we should comply;
 Would our dreamings *all* have flown?

THE LILT OF THE PARADISE BIRD.

(Villanelle.)

FAR away, in the distance, we heard,
Sounding clearly, through mists of the wood,
The lilt of the paradise bird.

Strong feelings within us were stirred.
That which dimly our hearts understood
Far away, in the distance, we heard.

Life's happiness plainly inferred,
A promise that surely made good
The lilt of the paradise bird.

Forever its singing averred
We must master our fate, as we should,
Far away, in the distance, we heard.

We should ne'er let our thoughts be deterred
From belief in the world's brotherhood,
The lilt of the paradise bird.

Though our footsteps may sometimes have erred,
We would join in that song, if we could.
Far away, in the distance, we heard
The lilt of the paradise bird.

DANTE.

(Villanelle.)

SIX hundred years ago and more,
Great Dante lived, and loved, and penned
Those words that still we ponder o'er.

His poems make the world adore
The woman he would fain commend,
Six hundred years ago and more.

They met,—upon that Farther Shore.
Could widest vision e'er transcend
Those words that still we ponder o'er?

On earth, wise rule he would restore.
His thoughts they did not comprehend,
Six hundred years ago and more.

His exile sadly we deplore;
Yet sorrow did but shape and blend
Those words that still we ponder o'er.

Earth's happiness his heart forswore;
With heavenly light that he might send,
Six hundred years ago and more,
Those words that still we ponder o'er!

DRAKE, AND THE RANSOM OF SAN
DOMINGO—1585.

(Sestina.)

“**B**RING forth your treasures!” quoth the sailor bold.
“For England needs them all, and in her cause
I stand to-day. No Spaniard shall escape
From paying tribute, which is fairly due
To English prowess, on the swelling sea,
As on the lands that know her mighty force.

“But though determined to resort to force
If needful, yet I am not over bold.
No wild and harsh freebooter of the sea
Am I,—and if you recognize the cause
Is just, and give us what indeed is due
To conquerors, I swear you shall escape.”

The magistrates considered this escape,
Well knowing all the violence and force
Which could be brought to bear, as justly due
To any one who dared to be so bold
As e’en to question by what right or cause
Came this demand, from rovers of the sea.

They waited, hoping that across the sea
Might come from Spain some chance of their escape,
Some partial help, to aid them in their cause.
But nothing came; and in despair, the force
Of vengeance was the only thought these bold
And hardy Spaniards felt their right and due.

And so they took the messenger then due,
Sent under flag of truce, which from the sea
Demanded toll, and struck and killed the bold
And daring lad, who could not then escape.
Ah, bitterly they rued this act of force!
And sadly did it work against their cause!

For Drake slew many Spaniards for this cause,
And felt that fearful ransom was his due,
When finally they yielded to his force
And paid a mighty sum, which o'er the sea
Was carried to Queen Bess. Yet their escape
From further ills they owed to Drake, the bold.

The world still calls him bold, commends his cause,
Lets him escape all blame. Such was the due
Of rovers of the sea, who ruled, by force!

WHEN APOLLO PASSES.

(Pantoum.)

A BRIGHTER glow across the land,
A sweeter scent upon the breeze,
A thrill we can not understand,
A quiver through the listening trees!

A sweeter scent upon the breeze
Than any we had known before;
A quiver through the listening trees,
And all across the sandy shore!

Than any we had known before
Far sweeter, in its deep delight;
And all across the sandy shore
The sunshine dazzles, with its might.

Far sweeter, in its deep delight,
To charm, and win, and glorify,
The sunshine dazzles, with its might!
We know Apollo passes by.

To charm, and win, and glorify,
To make the watching world admire,
We know Apollo passes by,—
We hear the ringing of his lyre.

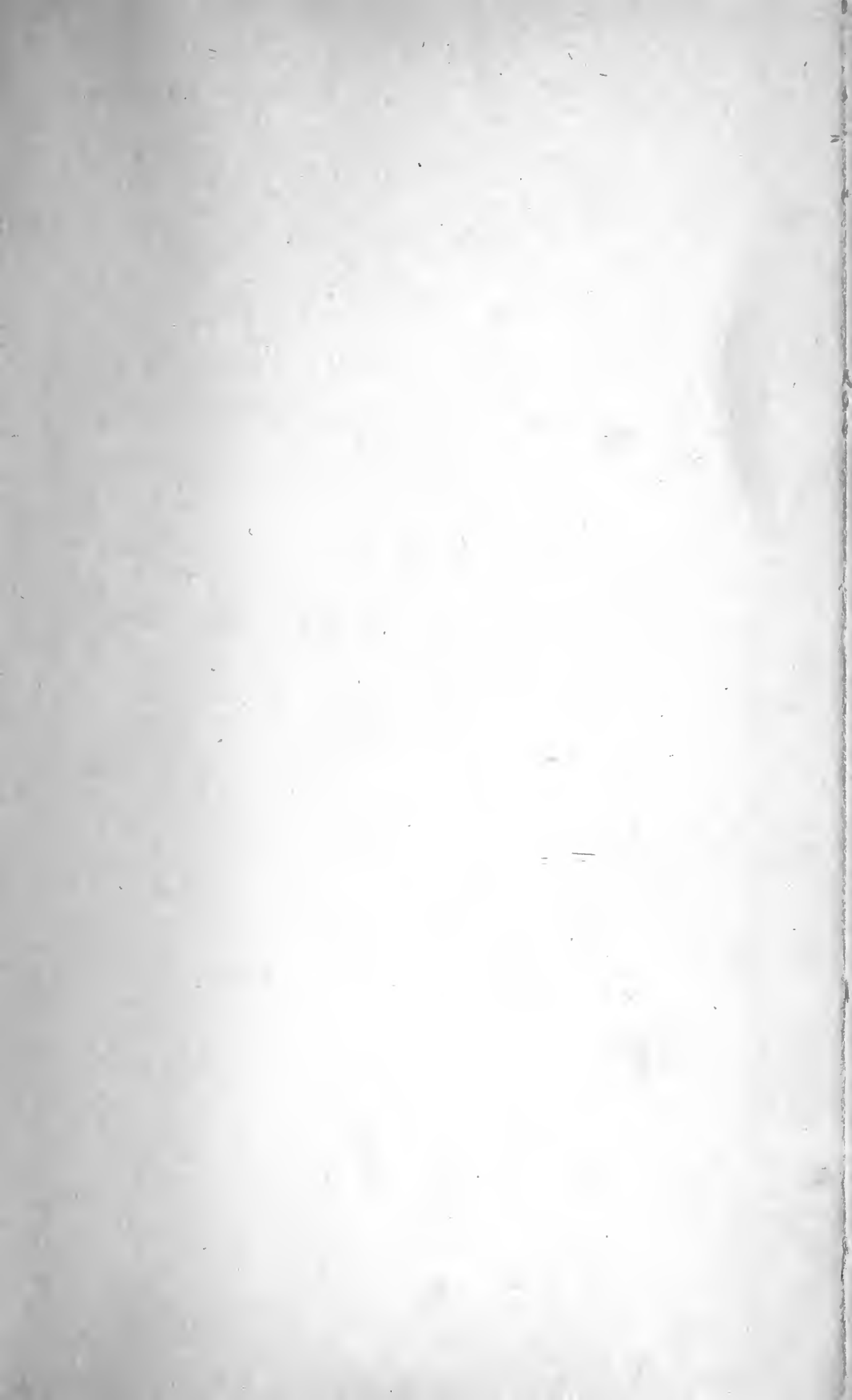
To make the watching world admire,
 He only has to cast his spell.
 We hear the ringing of his lyre,
 We feel at heart that all is well.

He only has to cast his spell,
 To banish care and hate and fear.
 We feel at heart that all is well;
 True happiness is ever near.

To banish care and hate and fear
 Apollo's music fitly rings.
 True happiness is ever near,
 And in our waiting hearts it sings.

Apollo's music fitly rings;
 A newer lease of life it gives,
 And in our waiting hearts it sings
 A pulsing song that throbs and lives.

A newer lease of life it gives,
 A thrill we can not understand,
 A pulsing song that throbs and lives,
 A brighter glow across the land!

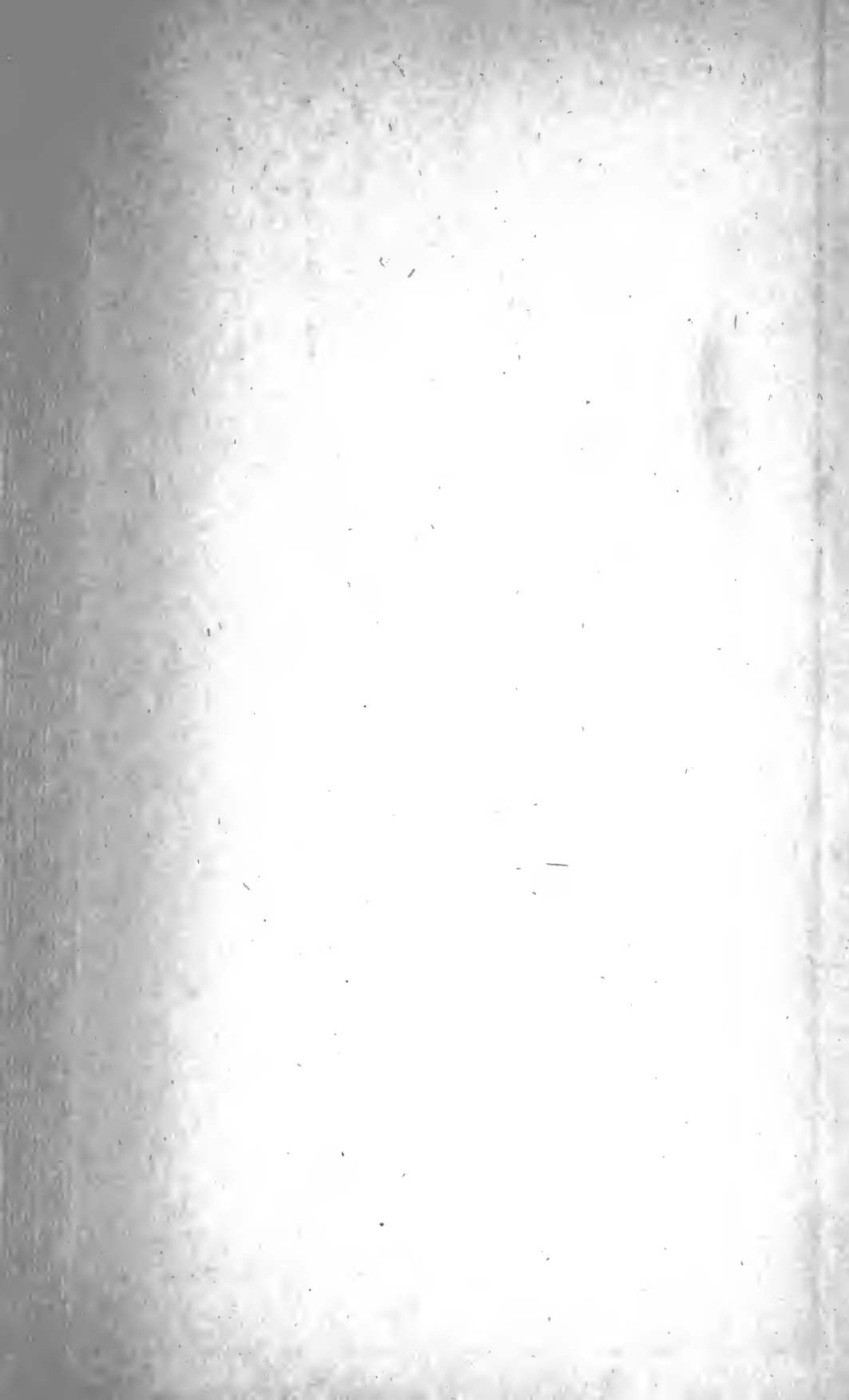


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Sept. 2009

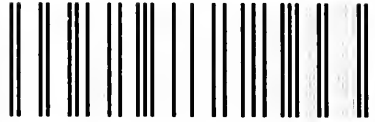
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